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**A VISIT**  
TO THE  
**TRANSVAAL;**

**Labour :**  
**White, Black, and Yellow.**

BY  
**THOS. BURT, M.P.**

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SEP 19 1934  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Printed and Published by the Co-operative Printing Society,  
Rutherford Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; also at  
Manchester and London.



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## PREFACE.

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**M**R. BURT, with his characteristic generosity, has presented the manuscript of the following Notes of a Visit to the Transvaal to our Association. As the notes are interesting and educational, on account of the labour problem that has arisen in South Africa, the gift will be highly appreciated by our members.

The writer's long and intimate connection with the trade union movement must give special value to what he says on the labour problem in the Transvaal.

As many persons outside of our Association will be glad to possess a copy of the pamphlet, a number will be offered to the public.

In giving the manuscript Mr. Burt imposed no conditions, but he expressed a wish that should any profit accrue from the sale, it might be handed over to the fund which is being raised to assist Mrs. Young, the widow of our late respected and much beloved secretary.

A moderate price has been fixed, and if, after paying the cost of printing and publishing, there should be any profit it will go to the above-named object.

HUGH BOYLE,

President of the Northumberland Miners'  
Mutual Confident Association.

*Burt Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne,  
May 1st, 1905.*





# NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS OF THE TRANSVAAL.

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LABOUR: WHITE, BLACK, AND YELLOW.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### PRELIMINARY.

#### PERSONAL. THE VOYAGE.

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I HAVE been three months in British South Africa—mostly in the Barberton district of the Transvaal. My visit was private and personal, rather than public and political; to see members of my family, and to recruit my health, which had been shaken by a succession of illnesses caught during the past two or three severe north country winters. Yet, though my visit was in no sense public, I could not quite forget that for 40 years I had been closely connected with organised labour in my own country, and that I had been a member of the House of Commons for more than 30 years. As the Transvaal, especially Johannesburg, has been the theatre of great events, some of them with far-reaching and tragical consequences; as there are, moreover, perplexing questions—political, racial and industrial—which are yet unsolved, and which are vexing alike the people

of the Colony and of the mother country, I felt it my duty to make myself acquainted with these as far as possible at first hand.

We sailed, my wife accompanying me, from Southampton, booked for Delagoa Bay, in the "Dunluce Castle," on October 15th, 1904, and we anchored in the harbour at Lorenzo Marques in the early morning of November 15th. All the time the ship was our home, and under the firm benign rule of Captain Stanistreet, more comfortable quarters we could not have desired. The "Dunluce Castle" registers 8,500 tons, and is the largest of the intermediate vessels of the Union Castle line. This was her first voyage, and she behaved well—forging along steadily whatever seas she encountered. In selecting Delagoa Bay, rather than Cape Town, for our port of debarkation our sea voyage was lengthened by about a 1,000 miles, while the railway journey was shortened by some 1,100 miles. Preferring, as we did, to travel by sea, this was a distinct gain. There were passengers for Las Palmas, Cape Town, Algoa Bay, East London, and Durban. Except at Durban, the stop was only for a few hours, just long enough to enable the passengers and their luggage to land. For Durban we had some 2,000 tons of cargo, and we were there five days.

When we left Southampton there were about 150 first-class passengers on board, most of whom were returning to South Africa after a short sojourn in England. Though many of them had been away from their native land for 30 or 40 years and had reared families in their adopted country, they invariably spoke of the old country as their home. Many of them were from Johannesburg, and they seemed to have secured a fair portion of the gold for which that part of the globe is noted. Amongst them were shareholders in gold and diamond mines, directors

of companies, merchants, auctioneers—sharp, eager, intelligent, enterprising business men. Not a few of them were keen politicians, who approached me with a view to discuss the political situation, imperial and South African. Perhaps I fought shy of these encounters. Like the “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table” I am a sort of intellectual non-combatant. Before starting I had resolved to use my eyes and ears freely and to rest my tongue, so far as that was permissible. Settled questions, or such as are unalterable, I never care to discuss. Of politics—especially of party controversial politics—I had drunk my fill during the long session. It was soon apparent that the questions which my fellow-passengers were most eager to discuss were precisely those for which I had no particular taste. Many of them, so they told me, had been Liberals, originally; they had been ardent admirers of Mr. Gladstone, but now their heroes were Cecil Rhodes, Lord Milner, and Mr. Chamberlain. They warmly approved of the importation of Chinese labourers; already this had produced a most beneficent effect, and it would be the salvation of Johannesburg and of the Transvaal. The Liberal party had blundered in opposing the war which was inevitable, as well as just. When anything is inevitable, it always seems to me needless to discuss its ethical merits. For the most part I listened in silence, except when frankness compelled me to tell them that I wholly dissented from their opinions, and, further, to make it apparent that their heroes were not mine.

One man only did I meet who had rigidly adhered to his Liberal opinions—who had not changed his creed with his change of meridian. He was a Scotsman, had been 15 years in Cape Colony, had stoutly opposed the war and the policy that produced the war. There were

in his town, East London, but other two men who took his view, and they had a hot time of it. Pro-Boer was the mildest epithet thrown at them. Now the pro-Boers, he said, were very numerous among his friends.

After I had listened to one after another of my fellow-passengers, I began to wonder how far their views were fairly representative of the British section of the South African population. I knew that in England the first-class traveller's view is not always, or often, that of the majority of the people. I soon found it the same in South Africa.

After we left Las Palmas, land was not seen again for 16 days, except that early-risers like myself might have caught a glimpse of Cape Verde in the distance. For amusement we were thrown largely upon our own resources. Seldom did we see a passing steamer, and even a sea-fowl was an unusual sight. Now and then a group of spectators might be observed peering into the sea. Somebody had seen a whale! On inquiry, the monster of the deep often proved to bear a striking resemblance to the nebulous whale that Hamlet pointed out to Polonius! Besides the usual extemporised games,—quoits, cricket, chess, dominoes,—there was a properly organised programme of athletic sports prepared by a duly elected committee, with an hon. president, chairman, hon. secretary, hon. treasurer, judges, &c.—quite a serious affair. To give it a touch of orthodoxy, there was a collection, open to all.

Much of this, I dare say, was according to use and wont. But one of the pastimes started on the "Dunluce Castle" was unusual, if not unique, that was a gathering for readings and recitations. Captain Stanistreet in his long experience had never before known or heard of anything of the kind. This owed its origin to a suggestion

made to me by a fellow-passenger, Mr. T. R. Haddon. Mr. Haddon, a native of England, had been about 40 years in South Africa, most of the time in Natal—now, and for some years past, in Johannesburg: a fine, genial, well-read man, fond of good literature, specially familiar with our best poetry, untainted by mammon. Everything at our reading meetings was informal, nobody was invited, everyone welcome, there was neither chairman nor programme. At first there was some reserve and shyness as to who should break the ice. On Mr. Haddon's suggestion, I started by reciting Wordsworth's Ode on "Intimations of Immortality"—a lofty flight, hazardous to the reciter, and rather a severe test to the auditors. All went well. Nearly every afternoon till we reached Cape Town we foregathered to read or recite poems from Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and other great masters of poetry and song. Both sexes took their part, some of our best readers being women. A few hours were thus spent pleasantly and not unprofitably, and it is some evidence of success that our little audience grew at every meeting, until at last it numbered more than a score.

Early on Sunday morning, November 6th, we sighted Table Mountain—some 3,600 feet high. At Cape Town most of our fellow-passengers left us. Here a great surprise awaited me. So far as I was aware the fact of our being on board the "Dunluce Castle" was known only to members of our family. For a while longer I fully expected to be free from letters, telegrams, interviewers, and deputations. Now, without warning, they came upon me thick and fast! First a little bundle of letters and two telegrams—nearly all from Johannesburg—and, with one exception, from unknown friends, or from societies of one kind or another. The letters welcomed me to South Africa—

some of them generously offering hospitality at Johannesburg—an offer which I gratefully declined. Then came three or four deputations, members of which delivered messages of welcome, one presenting a formal address well phrased, and artistically illustrated. The inevitable newspaper interviewer was also on the look-out. These kindly attentions I greatly appreciated, though they gave ominous hints that I might find it less easy than I wished to avoid meetings, speech-making, and demonstrations of a more or less public character.

All along the coast, at Cape Town, at Port Elizabeth, and at East London I heard, with regret, dismal accounts of trade depression and lack of employment. In some quarters there was dire distress. From merchants, store-keepers, and others I learnt that not for many years had business been so stagnant. Some of these ports “boomed” and flourished during the war, and now they were suffering from the reaction which inevitably follows costly and extravagant expenditure.

Durban, which we reached in the dawn of a bright summer morning, seemed to have emerged from its trade depression. Here all was bustle and activity. The town is laid out on a big scale, the long streets running mostly at right angles to each other, in American style. The local authorities had foresight enough to secure many thousands of acres of land. In the town the land is leased, and only for private residences is it sold outright. Pity that any portion of it should become the absolute property of the individual. A large revenue is derived from the town’s land, and this greatly reduces the rates, which are but 2½d. in the pound. There is a capital electric tram service—the trams belonging to the municipality.

The busy harbour affords striking evidence of the spirit and enterprise of the people. A year ago only the smaller



sailing craft could cross the bar, now the largest mail steamers, of more than 12,000 tons burthen can enter the harbour. The quay extends for over a mile and will yet be more extensive, and there are cranes capable of lifting many tons. There are also huge floating docks, which can accommodate ships of a few thousand tons,—docks and cranes alike, many of them, designed and built by the ingenious brains and skilful hands of Tynesiders.

A glance at the busy quay sufficed to show that we were no longer in a white man's country. Scores and hundreds of Zulus,—lithe, active, muscular men lined the wharf, actively engaged in loading and unloading the ships. They lifted and trundled into the sheds and warehouses huge boxes of merchandise, doing their heavy work in the broiling sun with apparent ease and playfulness. Never had I seen workers play with hard work and enjoy it as did these Zulus. I was told by their foreman that they received about 4/- a day, and he said that white men could not compete with them in work of the kind.

Cabs and 'buses I saw none in Durban. A lightly-built vehicle—the ricksha—affords means of locomotion, in the bye streets where the tram cars are not available. The ricksha is drawn by athletic, swift-footed Zulus who trot along at a quick pace. Under the burning African sun, and where the gradient is heavy the strain must be terribly severe, and I was not surprised to hear that two or three years of such work sufficed to kill off the strongest runner.

Our next and final port after leaving Durban was Lorenzo Marques. Here we bade farewell to the “Dunluce Castle,” which had afforded us food and shelter for more than four weeks, and had meanwhile carried us safely over more than 7,000 miles of sea—sometimes calm, sometimes stormy.

## CHAPTER II.

## KAAPSCHE HOOP:

## “THE DEVIL’S KANTOR.”

**K**AAPSCHE HOOP, literally Cape Hope, is in the Barberton District of the Transvaal, some 230 miles by rail from Johannesburg, and 130 from Lorenzo Marques. In this country one need not be particular to a few miles one way or another! Barberton, the nearest town, is 35 miles by road and, as the crow flies, 25 miles, while by mule wagon and railway combined it is a good 10 hours' journey from the one place to the other. Godwan River, the nearest railway station, is 13 miles distant, but, to convey anything like an adequate notion to the English mind, the 13 miles must be multiplied by at least three. As there is a river to ford, which is sometimes flooded, a bad road, in parts hardly a road at all, some 2,000 feet to climb, it will be seen that it is no joke to reach the place. Hither, with the help of four mules and a springless wagon, my wife and I arrived amid the mist and mizzle of a mid summer November day.

As Kaapsche Hoop was to be our temporary home for two or three months: as it afforded good opportunities of studying, at leisure, points of interest and importance in



the future life of the Colony—such as the relationship of the two white races to each other, the conditions of Kaffir life, local government and education in the country districts—it may be worth while to try to give a snap shot or two of the little place, its inhabitants, and their surroundings.

For Kaapsche Hoop I had looked in vain on the best maps, and yet, had I known it, the place was there under another designation the Devil's Kantor, the Devil's Office. There is a lofty, craggy peak called the Devil's Knuckles. There are also close by the Devil's Gate, the Devil's Lead, and "El Diabolo," which would seem to indicate that his Satanic majesty has left his name, if not his impress, on the locality.

The lover of grand natural scenery finds much to attract him here. In sight are the Drakensberg range of mountains, stretching to Swaziland, to the borders of Natal and to the Orange River Colony, some hundreds of miles, and rising in places more than 10,000 feet above the sea level. Kaapsche Hoop itself is nearly 6,000 feet above the sea, and the spectator sees mountains far off, which tower high above his stand point. Spitz Kop, 60 miles away and 7,500 feet high, is easily seen on a clear day, while in other directions, apparently higher and still further off, are other great mountain ranges. To add to the beauty there is a variety of colouring, a bright greenness in the grass, trees, and shrubs all around, which I observed in few other parts of South Africa. From the cliffs close by is one of the most impressive natural pictures that I ever saw. Sheer down two or three thousand feet below lies a vast basin-like valley, with a diameter of some 25 miles, edged by lofty mountain ranges, one beyond another. On a bright day Barberton is plainly visible, the clear atmosphere making it difficult to believe

that the place is so far away. "If you doubt the distance, walk it," was the curt advice when I expressed scepticism.

The whole scene is awful, awe-inspiring. No sound, no motion, apparently a veritable valley of death. Here we seem to be—

"At happy distance from earth's groaning field,  
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars."

And yet one need not look far to see proofs of disturbance and turmoil. The yawning chasms on every hand, the great boulders tost aloft into such fantastic shapes, the abandoned fortress close by with its wreckage of corrugated iron and barbed wire strewn around—all bear evidence of nature's convulsions and of man's conflicts.

The Kaap valley, too, with its death-like stillness, is not so lifeless as it seems. Kaffirs and white men are actively at work—some farming, some digging for gold. Portions of the soil are fruitful—growing tobacco, mealies, tomatoes, bananas, and other things required by man. Yet somehow one feels that man is dwindled and dwarfed by the colossal proportions of his surroundings. Not that the individual withers and degenerates, but the race—the superior race—does not multiply and flourish. Here one may travel, as I have done, day after day for miles over hills and veldt—and there are no trespass laws, no hedges, or fences—only the ramparts and chasms which nature herself has put as impediments in the traveller's way—one may go far without seeing the face of a white man. Look at the Transvaal as a whole. It is twice the size of England and Wales. Now, after a costly and bloody war—after spending two hundred and fifty millions sterling, and sending to death tens of thousands of brave men—it is British territory and its total white population numbers three hundred thousand—about equal to a moderate-sized English town.

The white inhabitants of Barberton number some 1,200; the district to which Barberton gives its name, of which Kaapsche Hoop forms part, has a total white population of about 2,000. The habitation seems large and expensive out of all proportion to the number of the inhabitants. Kaapsche Hoop, which has seen better days, has now a white population of about 120. There are some 20 families domiciled in as many scattered houses—the families being mainly of Dutch and English descent—the Dutch element numerically preponderating. The juveniles—fine, active, healthy children, numerous and sometimes noisy beyond belief considering the size of the place,—are, I am told, about 80 per cent. of the total population. There is a good Government school, well-attended; other signs of civilisation are a drinking saloon, a police station, and a post office,—the latter putting this obscure, remote place in touch with the great outside world. The other day I received from and sent to a friend at Newcastle-on-Tyne, a cable message in the space of a few hours.

Most of the adult males here are engaged, with varying fortune, in alluvial gold digging. This district, with Lydenburg, and Pilgrim's Rest, some 60 miles to the north was among the earliest and richest of the alluvial gold fields, of the Transvaal—there being at one time from a 1,000 to 1,500 diggers hereabouts. Within a few miles are Barrett's Gold Mining Co., and the Coetzeestroom—employing in all some 300 Kaffirs, and about 20 whites. Other 20 white men or so are working their own claims as diggers.

That there is still gold hereabouts is certain. But the question is will it pay for its extraction. Some of the alluvial diggers do fairly well. One of them—who has had some 30 years experience here and around Lydenburg

—a really capital type of man—has found more than one fine nugget, one of them weighing 27 oz. which he sold for £135. He is hard at work every day, but seldom does he win such a prize. The gold as a rule exists in such fine particles that it is only obtainable by a plentiful use of water. Lack of water is the great drawback in gold digging as in agriculture.

The digger referred to has a ready market for all his gold—a neighbouring syndicate purchasing it at £5 per oz. That is far above its market value; but the syndicate exhibits the gold as having been obtained on its own adjoining land, so that by thus fictitiously enhancing the value of its property, and by gulling somebody, it may recoup itself for its extra outlay.

For many miles in all directions the land has been pegged out and appropriated for gold digging. Beacons are struck in the ground, or erected on the crags, on which are inscribed the names and official numbers of the claimants—the sum of 2/6 per month for every claim being paid to the government as a license fee. Nearly all the claims, numbering many thousands, belong to great syndicates. As the land may be thus held for years without being worked, so long as the license is paid, the individual digger, nearly always a poor man, can hardly find a foot of land on which to try his luck. Another difficulty is that the license is only obtainable on personal application at Barberton—a journey which involves a serious expenditure of money and time for a poor man. Some of these grievances, very real grievances, were brought before Lord Milner by a deputation when his lordship visited Kaapsche Hoop a few months ago.

Though there was no actual fighting nearer than Godwan River Station, outward signs of the war are visible on every hand—they are seen in ruined block-houses, in

dismantled fortresses, and in men who will carry the scars that battle or disease has inflicted upon them to their graves. Almost daily I met men who fought on one side or the other. Here, as at Pretoria and at Johannesburg, in railway trains, on the roads, I talked with them—besiegers and besieged of Ladysmith, some who were kooped up at Mafeking during its long siege, others who fought in the ranks with Buller and Methuen—strong vigorous men in the prime of life when they enlisted are, many of them, now shattered by hard usage, by disease, or bullets.

A few yards from where I write lives a burger who had three sons in the fighting ranks. About the same distance south is another who was a field cornet during the whole campaign. This gentleman, Mr. Maritz, is descended from an old colonial Dutch family, from whom Maritzburg derives its name. Under the Boer Republic he was a magistrate, held in universal esteem by his neighbours, English and Dutch. Prior to the war he was really well off. By the war he lost heavily; a hundred head of fine cattle were taken; his well-stocked store with £900 worth of goods in it was looted; his money and furniture were appropriated, or, misappropriated. The money was ultimately restored, but everything else was lost. Mr. Maritz accepts all this philosophically as part of the ordinary fortune of war. He makes no complaint, he feels no resentment. "The war," he says, "was not our war, it was not made by the Boers, nor indeed by the British. The people of England were misled and befooled by the gold magnates of the Rand. In any case the war is over, and we must all—Boer and British—work together for the common good."

Mrs. Maritz, a brave, spirited woman of strong character, is less forgiving than her husband. Speaking



generally, I found the Boer women more bitter than the men, though, as a rule, their hostility is directed more against their own countrymen—"the joiners"—who acted as national scouts, than against the English. Mrs. Maritz and others speak warmly of the "Tommies" who behaved throughout with great sympathy and humanity. Of the officers they express themselves less favourably.

An incident of interest to English readers is told by Mrs. Maritz. All her chairs—25 in number—were taken with the rest of her furniture by the soldiers. Feeling unwell, and requiring rest, she went to beg the return of a chair. Some officers were seated on the verandah, and, observing a vacant chair, she was taking it away when one of the officers forcibly, and angrily wrested it from her grasp. Thereupon rose a young man and, courteously handing his own chair to Mrs. Maritz, said—"Here, madam, take this." The young man who thus at a stroke did an act of kindness to one person, and administered a well-merited rebuke to another—was Prince Christian.

By his kindness and affability while at Kaapsche Hoop the Prince endeared himself to old and young, to Boer and British. The Maritz family are fond of music—some of them being fairly expert pianists and good singers. One of the daughters, then a girl of 10 or 11 years of age, is gifted with a remarkably fine voice, and sings with great taste and feeling. The Prince often induced her to sing to him. On one occasion after she had sung with much gusto the National Anthem of the Boer Republic the Prince appealed to her to sing "God save the Queen." Wishful though she was to please the Prince, this was too great a strain on her Boer patriotism, "No" replied she emphatically—"that I cannot do. The Queen is a good woman and I hope she will be saved, but I won't ask God to save her."

By the way I could not but notice that when the school children, at the conclusion of an excellent concert, sang "God save the King" the Dutch section, fully one half and some of them the best singers, stood silent as statues.

Apart from my own family there were but three men in all South Africa whom I knew. Before I had been many days in the Transvaal I was fortunate enough to meet one of them—Sir Alfred Pease. Sir Alfred was then acting resident magistrate in the Barberton district. He is the son of the late Sir Joseph Pease, long and honourably known in the public life of England, as member for a Durham constituency. Sir Alfred himself was member for the Cleveland division of Yorkshire for some few years. A universal favourite with British and Boer—no easy achievement here—I heard but one criticism of his magisterial action, but that criticism was general. "He is too lenient with the Kaffirs, but after he has been here a while longer he will be cured of that." As Sir Alfred has tendered his resignation and is about to return to England, it becomes doubtful whether he will ever attain to the Transvaal standard of public duty in his treatment of the natives.

Sir Alfred and I visited the school together. The children—bright, clever, intelligent—gave prompt, accurate answers to the questions which were put to them. The music and singing were exceptionally good; better from children I never heard. "There lies our hope in the future," remarked Sir Alfred when we came outside. "The sores left by the war can only be healed by time. These children, Dutch and English, learning together, playing together, may be able to forget the bitter memories of the past, and may as men and women work together for the general well-being of the community."

## CHAPTER III.

## JOHANNESBURG.

THE TOWN: POLITICAL AND  
INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY.

A VISIT to Johannesburg was part of my programme. How I got there need not be told in detail. The distance from Kaapsche Hoop, in a direct line, judging by the map, must be under 170 miles. The journey from start to finish occupied some 36 hours! This excessive expenditure of time was partly due to our having to start the day before to catch the train at 5 a.m., and partly to a mishap on the railway by which some four or five hours were lost. As I am accustomed to go from Newcastle to King's Cross, 270 and odd miles, in less than six hours, I was but ill-prepared for an experience of this kind. But the physical difficulties of the Transvaal are great, and railway travelling there, if not so expeditious as might be desired, is certainly more comfortable than I expected.

Let it not vex the souls of the many good friends in Johannesburg, who showered their kindness upon me, when I confess that their town had little in itself to



draw me to it! Its huge, protuberant bump of acquisitiveness, its gross materialism, its mammon and mammon worship somewhat repelled me. But I found upon closer acquaintance that, though these features to my thinking, are abnormally developed, they are not the only or the best characteristics of the place. Be that as it may my warmest thanks are certainly due to the many persons, too numerous to mention, who generously offered hospitality, or who, busy men though they are, unstintedly gave their time and labour to supply me with the information which I required.

Though I had but two personal friends in the town—Mr. M. Dodd, mining engineer, and Mr. J. Wood, a working miner,—both from Northumberland,—and though the time of my arrival, and the hotel at which I was to lodge were purposely withheld, yet during my visit I had interviews, unsolicited on my part, with many of the leading people of Johannesburg. Among these were His Excellency Lord Milner; the Mayor, members of the Legislative Council, of the Town Council, of the Chamber of Commerce, of the Chamber of Mines, of the Trades Council, and the Miners' Association. Mining engineers, managers of mines, working miners,—trade unionists and non-unionists, I also met and conversed with, in great numbers. All invitations to address political meetings I declined, and indeed speech-making generally I avoided, so far as was possible. The only exceptions to this rule were short addresses which I delivered to the Northumberland and Durham Association, to the Trades Council and the Miners' Association, the latter of which I met in Conference. I may add that the Rand Club, and the New Club each made me an hon. member, and I lunched at the Atheneum Club, as the guest of the Mayor. Except as regards their libraries—a somewhat

serious exception—these institutions will bear favourable comparison with some of the best clubs in the old country.

I carried but one letter of introduction from England, that was from my old friend Sir John Swinburne, to his son who is acting mining engineer for the Government in the Transvaal. The Swinburnes, one of the oldest of our north country families, have for many generations served their country in peace and in war, and in the person of Algernon C. Swinburne, as all the world knows, their gifts have blossomed into the richest poetry. From Mr. U. P. Swinburne I received valuable information bearing upon every aspect of mining; at my request he gave me blue books and official documents of which I have made diligent use.

At the time of my visit to Johannesburg trade and politics were “booming.” Business in all departments had been passing through a long period of depression. Now there was a distinct revival, attributed wholly to the importation of Chinese labourers. In politics rival associations were being started, one section advocating what was called representative government, while another espoused the cause of responsible government. To the uninitiated it was not apparent why a government could not be at once representative and responsible. On analysis the difference seemed to be one of degree and procedure rather than of fundamental principle. Everybody, so far as I could make out, believed in responsible government as the only proper ultimate goal—*i.e.*, they want a Cabinet selected from the majority of the elected representatives and responsible to the electors. But whether such a government should be established at once or should come by degrees, that was the crucial point of divergence. I met and conversed with exponents of both

policies—sometimes I met them separately, sometimes together. I heard their arguments, but as a stranger, I did not feel called upon to take sides. Glad, however, was I to recognise that alike among the workmen and in the ranks of the commercial class there were men of ability, of sound judgment, of public spirit, and political intelligence, many of whom are capable of rendering great service to the community, and who would not discredit any legislative assembly in the world.

The town itself I cannot stop to describe, though it is full of interest—one of the most remarkable places on the face of the earth. Twenty years ago all around was a great solitude. Now the population all told reaches a total of some 160,000, of whom 84,000 are whites. Many of the buildings are fine substantial structures—some of them towering aloft more than 120 feet high—genuine sky-scrapers of the American type. From the summit of one of the highest of these I beheld a picture which for beauty and human interest it would be difficult to match. Around lay the spacious well-planned streets, the squares and parks. A little beyond were park-town, and other suburbs with their villas and stately mansions. Far away in the blue distance could be seen scores of miles of rolling veldt and well-wooded hills.

Among the most conspicuous objects which catch the visitor's eye are the scores of tall chimneys of the gold mines, seen for many miles almost to the limit of human vision, and in this clear air the eye can see far. Unlike our coal-pits, these mines do not blacken and disfigure the landscape. The gold bearing reef series extends from Randfontein to Holfontein—a distance of 60 miles. The full extent of the reef in all directions is unknown, nor has the depth to which it can be worked been accurately ascertained. But, taking it altogether, there can be no

doubt that these are the richest gold fields on the face of the globe.

This vast wealth—the land, far as the eye can see and hundreds of miles further, with the gold, coal, iron and other valuable minerals beneath its surface—all are now part of the British empire—the largest, freest empire under the sun. Surely this must swell the patriotic heart with honest pride! So it would were there no “compunctious visitings” as to the methods by which it was acquired. But on that point I need not dwell; history will give its verdict. We have high authority for saying that territory and gold fields alike came unsought! “We seek no gold fields, we want no territory, all we desire is equal rights for all men of all races, and the security of our empire.” These words, or words to this purport—I quote from memory—were uttered by the late Lord Salisbury as a declaration of our war policy. The territory and the gold fields are ours. Where are the equal rights? They sadly lag behind, and, so far as I can judge, not one man in a hundred of those whom I met on this sub-continent, so much as believes a whit in equal rights except for himself, and perhaps for men of his own race and complexion.

The territory and the gold fields being ours should now be developed and utilized for the good of the whole British community, not forgetting the mother country which spent its treasure and spilt its blood so freely for their acquisition.

There is no risk that the importance of the gold mines will be underestimated. Here they count for well nigh everything. And let it be frankly recognised that gold mining on the Rand is a great industry, the greatest of its kind in the world. Nothing like it has ever been known before. Elsewhere gold mining has always been more or less fitful, and precarious. Here, favoured by nature,

directed by experts of great skill, energy, and practical sagacity, it has been organised into a scientific industry, the produce of which comes almost with the certainty and regularity of a cotton mill or a coal mine.

Capital, management, labour—these here and everywhere are the essential factors of production. Far below the surface are thousands of workmen, white, yellow, black, without whose toil no gold would be produced. It is to inquire into the labour problem generally, especially to ascertain the facts with regard to the Chinese labourers; it is for these objects mainly that I came hither, and these questions I shall proceed to examine and discuss.

## CHAPTER IV.

## LABOUR: THE KAFFIRS.

THE labour problem in the Transvaal, or rather in the gold mines, for elsewhere little or nothing is heard of it, is a very complex one, and in some of its aspects it is so full of grotesque contradictions that it almost invites ridicule. Here, in the richest part of the world, the great outcry is that the supply of unskilled manual labour, or of what the Chamber of Mines calls "muscular machines," is insufficient. To meet the deficiency, Chinese labourers have been imported. The strongest advocates of their importation admit that this was a method of solving the difficulty which nothing but the direst necessity could justify.

"No one wanted to import Chinamen into the Transvaal; no one desired to add another possible problem to the many that distressed South Africa has to deal with; but what were we to do? The great requirement is white population. White population able to earn a fair living wage, to bring up families upon a respectable basis, and to people the country hereafter with British colonists. The only way to secure that population is to extend the working of the gold mines; not merely to bring the output up to the figure at which it stood prior to the war, but to increase it to the highest possible point." This I

quote from a speech delivered by Mr. Lionel Phillips at the Hotel Metropole, on July 7th, of last year. Mr. Phillips is an ex-president of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines. His authority as a capable exponent of the views of the capitalists and employers of the gold mines will not be questioned. Mr. Phillips frankly recognises how undesirable it is to add to the racial perplexities with which South Africa is harrassed. But the plea of necessity is put forward, and it is urged that the great increase in the white population which must follow will rectify every evil and will vindicate whatever has been done. The great want is white population, therefore let us bring tens of thousands of yellow men! As an argument, that looks rather fantastical. Whether the best, if not the only, way to increase the number of whites is to greatly add to the number of coloured men, and to what extent the introduction of Chinamen has had the effect attributed to it, I shall examine carefully hereafter.

Meanwhile the following questions among others suggest themselves. Has the necessity for the bringing of Chinese labourers been established beyond all controversy? Was there actually a shortage of unskilled labour, and, so far as that shortage existed, could it not have been rectified in other and less objectionable ways? Then there is the political and imperial position. Whether, seeing that the Transvaal was without self-government, was in fact destitute of any shred of popular representation, the Home Government should have so complacently acquiesced in the demands of the Chamber of Mines? All this manifestly involves matters of deep concern which reach far beyond the position and interests of the Chinese labourers.

The war, as everybody with eyes must have foreseen dislocated the whole gold mining industry. Under the



most favourable conditions enormous difficulties must have stood in the way before the pre-war standard of employment and produce could be attained. It is greatly to the credit of the enterprise and energy of all concerned in the industry that the progress was so rapid.

What was the position before the war? I summarise the following facts from a Report prepared by the Chamber of Mines for the information of Mr. Chamberlain when he visited South Africa. I am indebted to the officials of the Chamber of Mines for a copy which they kindly gave me, together with the interesting plans and diagrams which accompany the Report:—In 1899 there were employed at the gold and coal mines of the Transvaal about 100,000 natives. At the end of May, 1902, there were 37,000, and in November 48,000. In 1902 the natives have been supervised more closely than in 1898 and have been paid 30 per cent. less wages. The cost of coal has been reduced and the cost of explosives is less now than then by 30 per cent.; but these advantages have all been more than lost by the greater cost of labour and the reduced scale of working.

To whatever cause the “greater cost of labour” here mentioned was due it is clear that the Kaffirs were not responsible for it. What they got was closer supervision—which I suppose meant more work—and 30 per cent. less pay. Immediately after the conclusion of the war Kaffir wages were greatly reduced. To me it is amazing that shrewd employers, short of labour, should have been able to devise no better method of attracting it than by reducing wages to nearly half of what they had been before the war.

If it was thought that coloured men are not influenced by similar motives to those which influence white men, and that the rate of pay is immaterial to the natives,



the mining authorities must soon have been undeceived. Bearing upon that point here is an extract from the Annual Report of the Transvaal Mines Department for the statistical year ending June, 1903. At page 14 appears the following:—"The increase in the supply of natives during the last six months of the year under review" (viz., from January to June, 1903, when the increase in the number of Kaffirs was 18,163) "was at a very much faster rate than the preceding six months. This may be largely accounted for by the fact that a revised rate of pay authorised by the Chamber of Mines was adopted, which permitted the native to earn up to 60s. per month." . . . "It is apparent that the higher rate of wage now offered, the great improvement in the housing accommodation and rations provided, the extra freedom granted to the natives in allowing them to choose their own mines on coming to these Fields, has had a most beneficial effect. A comparatively large number of 'Cape boys' have come up to the mines seeking work since the increased rate of wages came into force. Possessed of a higher intelligence this class of worker is much more efficient and economical than the native."

In considering the available supply of unskilled manual labour for the mines it is well to look at the total Kaffir population. According to the latest authoritative statistics there are over 7,000,000 coloured people south of the Zambesi; when Central Africa is included the number reaches—on the authority of the Transvaal Labour Commission—a total of 13,597,691. At first sight this would seem to afford material for an ample labour supply. But considerable deductions must be made before a fair estimate can be formed. Obviously, for employment in the mines, women, children, young, and aged persons must be excluded. Another important point is that recruiting

for natives, except for employment within their own boundaries, is prohibited by Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange River Colony, and Southern Rhodesia.

Then again it is not the gold mines only, but the land and all the other industries that require Kaffir labour. Many natives, too, work on their own land, they are living well and contentedly, under healthier, safer, and altogether happier conditions than the gold mines offer them. From mere figures, therefore, it would be unsafe to assert anything positively, except that there is in South Africa a very large coloured population, which numerically preponderates immensely over the whites. On the whole nearly all the persons with whom I talked, and they were many, agreed that there was for present needs and future developments a great shortage of unskilled labour in the mines. Some practical, competent men qualified that opinion by saying that, for present requirements, there was quite enough labour, but that for the opening out of new mines, and the development of the existing mines, the supply was certainly insufficient. But on one point there was practical unanimity, namely, that Kaffirs were obtainable, at one period in much greater numbers, but that they were deliberately kept back, or the recruiting was slackened, in order to establish a case for the importation of Chinese. Everybody I met away from the Rand, and many miners and other workmen there, held that view. Again and again I was told by persons whose veracity I could not doubt, that from personal knowledge they could testify that Kaffirs were obtainable in large numbers, and this at the very time when the outcry in the Johannesburg press was loudest as to shortage of labour. This opinion came almost entirely from persons who were themselves strongly in favour of the importation of the Chinese.


One gentleman in particular informed me that he knew an agent who had offered 10,000 Kaffirs at once, and he would further guarantee to supply a minimum of 2,000 per month continuously. This information was brought before the mining authorities of Johannesburg, but nothing was done to obtain these natives.

My informant was himself a warm advocate of Chinese labour; he had been engaged on the Rand Mines for many years; he is himself an employer in gold mining; moreover, his judgment is entirely undisturbed by sentimental theories, or humanitarian notions. "The great thing," he frankly declared, "for the Chamber of Mines, and the mining officials to consider is, how they can secure the cheapest labour and the highest dividends. Unless they do that they are not fulfilling their duty to the shareholders. They believe that ultimately the best way to obtain cheap labour and big dividends is to bring thousands of Chinamen, and to the achievement of that object all their resources have been directed."

This I give for what it is worth. Opinion, I quite recognise, is one thing, proof another. Testimony, too, should be received with caution. But I have no reason to doubt the veracity of my informants who declared of their own knowledge that natives could have been got in greater numbers for the mines. The widely prevalent opinion which accords with this testimony further harmonises facts which are otherwise inexplicable. One thing is certain. The Chamber of Mines, which determines the policy of the mining companies, while unable to increase the supply of natives indefinitely, can without difficulty diminish the number. I believe that was done at a certain period. Not without reluctance, I shall have to trouble the reader with figures which appear to me to support that view.

## CHAPTER V.

SKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOUR.  
OFFICIAL STATISTICS.

F the many pages of Blue Books and of the numerous columns of figures which I have examined, I shall trouble the reader with as few as possible. But since the following figures have an important bearing upon the whole labour problem on the Rand, whether as regards Kaffirs, Chinese, or Whites, I think they should be given in full. To save space I should have been glad to summarise them, but to present them in their completeness will enable the critical reader to judge for himself how far they bear out my inferences and arguments. We have already seen from the Chamber of Mines' Report to Mr. Chamberlain that, at the end of 1902, the natives employed on the gold mines were, in round numbers, 48,000. The following statement gives, month by month, the increase since then, together with the total number of Whites and Chinese employed up to the end of 1904.

# LABOUR ON GOLD MINES.

Compiled from Government Mining Engineers' Returns  
of employees at work on the last day of each  
month, for 1903 and 1904.

Month.	HANDS EMPLOYED.				Differences in White Labour.		Differences in Coloured Labour.	
	White.	Kaffir.	Chinese.	Total Coloured	In- crease	De- crease	In- crease	De- crease
1903.								
January ..	10,783	48,058	..	48,058	..	..	..	..
February ..	10,879	51,540	..	51,540	96	..	3,482	..
March ....	11,166	56,577	..	56,577	287	..	5,037	..
April .....	11,305	60,557	..	60,557	139	..	3,980	..
May .....	11,439	64,480	..	64,480	134	..	3,923	..
June .....	11,825	66,221	..	66,221	386	..	1,741	..
July .....	11,873	68,217	..	68,217	48	..	1,996	..
August ....	12,140	69,688	..	69,688	267	..	1,471	..
September.	12,491	70,255	..	70,255	351	..	567	..
October ..	12,456	71,659	..	71,659	..	35	1,404	..
November.	12,744	72,748	..	72,748	288	..	1,089	..
December.	12,702	73,622	..	73,622	..	42	874	..
1904.								
January ..	12,814	75,120	..	75,120	112	..	1,498	..
February ..	12,801	77,899	..	77,899	..	13	2,779	..
March ....	12,681	79,569	..	79,569	..	120	1,670	..
April .....	12,740	78,825	..	78,825	59	..	..	744
May .....	13,127	77,519	..	77,519	387	..	..	1,306
June .....	13,413	74,632	1,004	75,636	286	..	..	1,883
July .....	13,707	73,370	1,388	74,758	294	..	..	878
August ....	14,333	73,148	4,945	78,093	626	..	3,335	..
September	14,423	75,411	9,020	84,431	90	..	6,321	..
October ..	14,525	78,491	12,965	91,456	102	..	7,042	..
November.	14,944	81,673	17,469	99,142	419	..	7,686	..
December.	15,023	83,639	20,885	104,524	79	..	5,382	..

One striking feature in these figures, it will be noted, is the sudden and unprecedented decrease in the number of coloured workers beginning early in 1904. From April to August of that year the decrease was continuous—so far as the Kaffirs were concerned—the total fall having

been no fewer than 6,421. Nothing of the kind had ever previously occurred. Always before there had been an increase every month, fluctuating, it is true, from a maximum of 5,037 in March, 1903, to a minimum of 567 in September. In March, 1904, the increase, it will be observed, was 1,670, followed in April by a decrease of 744. A few months previous to this the white workers had decreased by 210. This, too, was without precedent.

Those who contend that the only way to employ more white men is to increase the number of coloured workers, may be able to explain how it comes that when the natives were increasing considerably, the white employees were at the self-same time diminishing, and why again when the natives were diminishing white men were employed in much greater numbers. I shall deal separately with the question how far the importation of Chinamen has provided employment for additional white workers. I think I shall be able to show that there is much less in this assumption than its advocates suppose, and that, in fact, the contention is either an ignorant or a dishonest one.

But, meanwhile, what is the explanation of this sudden arrest in the supply of natives for the mines? Certainly explanation is required. The suggestion that the supply of natives fluctuates with the season of the year, while probably true, does not account for the decrease in this instance, since there had been a considerable increase in the corresponding months of the previous year.

It is significant that this diminution in the number of employees, white and coloured, occurred when the agitation for the importation of the Chinese was at its hottest and fiercest. There was great hostility—at first very general hostility—to this method of solving the labour difficulty. Public opinion had to be educated; the white



workers, too, had to be educated. Dismissal of workers, diminished employment, hunger—these were called in as effective allies in the educational process.

In January, 1903, there were, it will be seen, 48,058 Kaffirs on the mines; in December there were 73,622, an increase for the year of 25,564. The increase continued up to March of last year, when the Labour Ordinance was passed. If the Government had resolutely refused to sanction the Ordinance; if they had from the first, told the mine owners plainly and firmly that no Chinese should be brought into the Transvaal, can any one say with certainty that the increase of Kaffirs would not have continued, and that, without the Chinese, there might not have been quite as many white men employed in the mines as there are now?

How far is it practicable to supplement the shortage of Kaffir labour by the employment of white men? That white men can do the work is undeniable. That industrious, willing whites, anxious to work, and unable to find employment, are to be found in sad abundance is also beyond doubt. In every part of the United Kingdom they abound. In Cape Town, in Kimberley, and in other parts of South Africa, the Johannesburg newspapers tell of meetings of unemployed whites, at which hungry men clamour for work and wages that they may feed their wives and children. In Johannesburg itself—around the gold mines—there are crowds of unemployed men, eager for work. No recruiting agent need go in search of them. Employers needing workers, workers begging for leave to toil! How strange, how incongruous, how contradictory it all seems.

Let it be frankly admitted that great difficulties stand in the way of employing unskilled white men in the mines. Not the least grave of these difficulties white

men themselves are partly responsible for. On that point I shall have something to say hereafter.

But that white men can do the work is, as I have said, beyond all question. In fact no further back than August last there were upwards of 900 unskilled white workers actually employed on the Rand gold mines.

The best known instance of the employment of unskilled whites is that of the Village Main Reef Mine when under the management of Mr. F. H. P. Cresswell. When in Johannesburg I had interviews with Mr. Cresswell, and heard from him a good deal on the subject. No one can meet Mr. Cresswell without recognising that he is a high-souled man, of great energy and intelligence. Of his character, of his ability in his profession as a mining engineer everybody speaks well. I was indeed warned to be on my guard when meeting him, lest he should influence me by his 'fads'. That did not deter me, as I have often found that the faddist is a man of ideas, of ideals, and principles, who thinks for himself, and who tries to carry his ideas and principles into practice. The only fad I detected in Mr. Cresswell was one with which I entirely sympathised. That was his notion that, whenever practicable, free white men should be employed in preference to indentured coolies; that the importation of tens of thousands of yellow men, under the restrictions imposed by the Ordinance must degrade labour itself, and must inevitably produce other evils of the most serious character.

It is unnecessary to enter into details of Mr. Cresswell's work at the Village Reef Mine. The main facts have been laid before the public in the evidence which that gentleman submitted to the Transvaal Labour Commission. More recently they have been summarised in



the able articles contributed by Mr. Naylor to the *Daily Chronicle*. From the figures given by Mr. Cresswell it is apparent that there was no very considerable difference in the cost of production as between white and black labour. White labour was more costly in some sections of work, less costly in others.

That in some departments of unskilled labour white men may be economically employed is confirmed from other and unexpected quarters. Two mining engineers—Mr. C. J. Price and Mr. C. H. Spencer—who gave evidence before the Transvaal Labour Commission in opposition to Mr. Cresswell's evidence, had themselves previously inquired into and reported on the experiments at the village Main Reef Mine. In their Report they specify under different heads certain kinds of work, both underground and on the surface, which "it would be advantageous for the industry" to employ white men to do. These gentlemen conclude their Report by saying that "while not agreeing with Mr. Cresswell, we highly appreciate the thorough manner in which he has endeavoured to augment the limited supply of natives at his command by the intelligent use of unskilled white labour, and we consider that his present ideas for the distribution of this labour underground cannot be improved on."

To my mind it is clear that if anything like the energy and resource, the ingenuity and persistency, the profuse expenditure of money and thought, which the mining authorities have so unsparingly devoted to the bringing and training of yellow men, had been directed to the employment of whites, there would have been, without detriment to the industry, many hundreds, probably many thousands, more white men engaged on the mines than there are to-day.

But there are, as I have said, great difficulties, economic and sentimental, in the way of employing unskilled white labour. The economic difficulties are two-fold. In rough, hard manual labour, as mere "muscular machines" the white worker cannot compete with the coloured. It is only when intellect, skill, special training are required that the white man's superiority makes itself manifest. Hence, though the white man can certainly perform what is contemptuously called "Kaffir work," and can do it quite as well, to say the least, as the Kaffir, he cannot, as a rule, work at anything like the same wage as the Kaffir. The pay for white unskilled labour on the mines has generally been about 9/- to 10/- per day, while skilled white workers have received from 17/- to 20/-, some of them much more. Now while 9/- per day would be regarded as a very big wage for an unskilled labourer in England, it is little more than a living wage, even for a single man in, or around, Johannesburg. For a married man, with a family, such a wage is wholly inadequate.

## CHAPTER VI.

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NOMINAL AND REAL WAGE:  
COST OF LIVING.

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THE difference between the nominal and the real wage—between the money received and its purchasing power—is a standing puzzle to the ordinary working-man. When 10/- or 20/- is mentioned as a daily wage he imagines that the receiver of such a wage must be exceedingly well off. If he is told, as he may be told with truth, that in spending his money in the Transvaal it will be a safe rule, especially if sickness comes, to divide by three, or perhaps four, as compared with England, he will more correctly gauge the value of the big wage. The Transvaal enjoys all the blessings of protection which are being so eloquently commended to the English working-man. The excessively high price of everything tells with special severity against the married man who has a family to maintain. When we look at the proportion of single to married men on the Rand mines it is clear that there is something wholly abnormal and socially unhealthy in the situation. From the Chamber of Mines' Report to Mr. Chamberlain, I find that the

Single men on the mines were	- - - - -	63·89 %
Married men with their families on the Rand were		20·13 %
Married men with their families away were	- - -	15·98 %

This was in 1902. I tried to obtain more recent figures, but they were not available. I have no reason to think that the proportions since 1902 have altered to any great extent. The figures are very significant, and very unsatisfactory. For a working-man to maintain and rear a family respectably and in moderate comfort, a large income is required. The Chamber of Mines puts the average cost of living for a family, taking as a basis, the man, his wife, and three children, at £24 10s. 0d. per month. Such a body would not be at all likely to exaggerate the cost, and the estimate seems moderate.

I visited and was the guest of several workmen—miners, engineers, and railway men—at their homes, and I had from them practical confirmation of the excessive cost of housekeeping. I may give one or two illustrations. A north-country miner, with whom my wife and I spent a Sunday afternoon, in Johannesburg, in answer to questions, gave the chief items of his household expenditure for the previous month, as follows:—

Rent.....	£9	0	0
Butcher .....	5	0	0
Groceries .....	11	0	0
Vegetables, &c. ....	2	0	0
Total.....	<u>£27</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

The household in this case numbered five in all—three adults and two boys, the older 16 and the younger 9 or 10 years of age.

A schoolmaster from Krugersdorp came to see me at my friend's house. His domestic expenditure, or the chief items, for the month were:—

Rent .....	£10	0	0
Groceries.....	11	0	0
Bread .....	1	3	0
Butcher .....	2	0	0
Total.....	<u>£24</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>

There were in this household three adults and three children. It will be observed that the grocer's bill is the same in both instances, but there is a great difference in the amount for butcher meat. My schoolmaster friend said that he and his family were very light meat consumers. The eye of the expert housewife will note many omissions. Manifestly these are far from complete family budgets, though, so far as they go, I can vouch for their accuracy. There is nothing for clothing, nothing for milk and eggs—both extremely dear—eggs sometimes costing as much as 6/- and 8/- per dozen, and never less than 3/6 per dozen. So much for the economic side.

But besides the economic difficulties, there is what I have called the sentimental objection, which is equally operative against the employment of white unskilled labour, and for this the white man is himself largely responsible. The sentiment that manual labour degrades the white man is widely prevalent in the Transvaal. The notion is not, as it is in England now-a-days, confined to empty-headed snobs, but it is so general as to be practically the public opinion of the country. The white man's proper function, if he must do something, is to be the "boss" and director of the coloured man, but he must not soil his dainty fingers with any hard, dirty work! So flattering is it to belong to the superior race, and so little practical belief is there in Christ's teaching, that the higher should minister to and help the lower, that the pernicious doctrine referred to, is never, so far as I have observed, rebuked or combated by the appointed teachers or guides of the people either in church or state. Here is a little incident of a serio-comic kind! A friend informed me that it had been a hobby of his in England to do occasional spade work in his garden. When he introduced this innocent home practice into the

Transvaal it was whispered to him by some of his neighbours who desired to protect his reputation, that such work was hardly becoming in a gentleman of his standing and position !

I notice that Mr. Lionel Phillips, in the speech from which I have already quoted says: "It has been urged that white men might be induced to do similar work to the natives, and side by side with them. I need only point out that it is customary for mechanics in South Africa to be attended by one or more black men, who carry and hand them their tools, to bring home the fact that it would be a degradation in the eyes of a white man if, under such conditions, he performed work of a similar character to the natives. The whole idea is preposterous."

If the objection were merely to the white man "working side by side" with the natives, something might be said for it, since white men among themselves, naturally and properly, like to have a voice in the selection of their work-mates. The mining officials who have separated the Chinese from the Kaffirs in their work, and who arrange that different tribes of Kaffirs who are hostile to each other, shall as far as practicable, work in separate gangs, would no doubt be capable of dealing with this difficulty also. But it is clear from the context, of Mr. Phillips' speech, that it is mainly the idea of the white man doing "labour of a similar character to the natives," that is so shocking, or to use Mr. Phillips' own term, that is so "preposterous" to the sensitive soul of that gentleman.

I had thought that the doctrine of the value and dignity of labour had now become the accepted creed of all men whose opinions are worth considering; I had imagined that the notion that any honest, useful labour could be other than honourable to any man, whatever

the colour of his skin, belonged to other times, or if it still had its adherents, that they would be found elsewhere than on British territory ; I had thought that the idler, and loafer, the man of whatever rank or race, who lives upon others without giving, so far as he can, something in thought or labour to the community, that he, and not the worker is "degraded" and is a fit subject if anybody is for contempt and reprobation.

By way of apologising for the notion that unskilled manual labour degrades the white man in South Africa, it has been said, I think by the present Colonial Secretary and others, that wherever white men are a minority surrounded by a large coloured population the same sentiment prevails. That may be ; but I am not aware that any country where such a view is held has ever become a great white man's country, or has achieved greatness of any kind.

There is always, too, a heavy penalty to pay by the whites themselves, where such notions prevail. Scores and hundreds of white men are paying that penalty now in South Africa. There, as elsewhere, the terrible tragedy of the unemployed is being enacted, and it appears there in the most aggravated form. It is hard enough anywhere for a man who is able and willing to work to be unable to obtain employment, it is doubly-hard when he is stranded in a distant land ; but when he has the offer of work, probably at a very low wage, it is cruel for him to feel that he cannot accept it without degrading himself in the eyes of his fellow-men.

History tells that wherever a class, or a race, is set apart as "beasts of burden," as the only fit persons to do the necessary hard manual labour for a privileged order, a stigma is cast upon labour itself, and such work soon comes to be regarded with something like scorn and



contempt. It is an easy step and a certain one from contempt of the work to contempt for the worker. So was it with the "mean whites" in the Southern States of America in the old slavery days. Even in Europe itself, where the serfs were white men, it has taken a thousand years to destroy the pestilent heresy that manual labour carries with it a taint of disgrace and degradation.

In what I have said I must guard myself against being understood even to hint that the whites of the Transvaal are wanting in industry. On the contrary, I believe they are among the most hard-working, enterprising people in the world. But there is admittedly a strong, general, and, as I think, a most pernicious notion, that for the white man to do any rough manual labour is a degradation to him.

Deep-rooted and wide-spread though that sentiment is, I believe it is doomed to speedy extinction. I do not despair that a healthier, worthier view will spring up; I have, indeed, seen many signs of its advent. White men are not universally ashamed to do what is scornfully called "Kaffir work." Hundreds of them do it without any sense of degradation; and thousands more would be glad of the opportunity if they could be assured of an adequate wage in return for their labour. In the country districts of the Transvaal I have seen white men working hard with pick and shovel. I have seen them digging and delving in their gardens, with Kaffirs working by their side. I have seen a Boer farmer thus working beside his own Kaffir "boys." Many of these white men were not pricked by the spur of necessity. By their example they were thus condemning, more emphatically than they could by speech, a doctrine which casts a slur on honest labour, and which must inflict untold evil on any country which carries it into practice.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE CHINESE AND THE INCREASE  
OF WHITE LABOUR.

THE favourite argument for the importation of Chinese labour is that it gives a great impetus to the employment of white men. I call it an argument, for there seems to be a sort of reasoning process involved. So far as I can make out, the argument runs thus:—"The great requirement is white population," says Mr. L. Phillips, "the way to increase 'whites' is to bring crowds of 'yellows.' The bringing of 'yellows' has already enormously increased the 'whites.'" That the number of white workers has increased since the Chinamen were brought is beyond doubt. But it is by no means so certain that the increase is wholly, or mainly, attributable to the Chinese. Into these points I shall carefully inquire presently. But the way in which any little increase in white labour is boomed and exaggerated by the Johannesburg press, and even by distinguished men in the Transvaal and in England, is as absurd as it is amazing. Here is a cutting from the *Johannesburg Star*, for December 23rd. Probably the printer has not capitals large enough to do full justice to the extract:—

“INCREASE OF WHITE  
LABOUR.

---

ON THE WITWATERSRAND.

---

NUMBERS EMPLOYED.

---

	Whites.		Chinese.
JUNE .....	12,730	...	1,004
NOVEMBER .....	14,238	...	17,469
INCREASE.....	1,508		

Of which nearly all is directly due  
to the advent of Chinese labour.”

Much on the same lines, and with equal emphasis of capitals, we are regaled with quotations from Lord Milner, and from Mr. Lyttelton. The *Johannesburg Daily Mail* for November 5th quotes from a letter of Lord Milner's, addressed to a Conservative meeting at Dorking. In that letter his lordship said that “the introduction of from 7,000 to 10,000 Chinese had resulted in the employment of a 1,000 additional white men.” In the same paper we are told that Lord Milner had expressed “his belief that for every coolie employed there would be an additional European man, woman, or child living a life of comfort and ease.” No very heroic ideal to live in “comfort and ease” on other men's drudgery! Near about the same time Mr. Lyttelton was reported in the *Johannesburg* press to have said in a speech to his constituents that “the result of Chinese immigration had been to add 1,700 white men to the population of the mines.”

Everything of this kind is triumphantly cited by the Johannesburg newspapers, as a conclusive answer to the English Radicals and their "halfpenny press"—the lordly "threepennies" looking down with a fine contempt upon their plebeian 'halfpenny' relations.

Whether Lord Milner expressed the belief attributed to him, namely, that for every coolie employed an additional European would be benefited, I do not know. I think it is doubtful that he ever said anything so crude, so commonplace, and so questionable. But in any case the statement is arbitrary and valueless, since we are afforded no means of testing the foundation of the "belief." Of course 20,000 additional labourers cannot be employed in any useful, profitable industry without conferring great benefits, directly and indirectly upon multitudes of people. But that is a general proposition which would apply to the labourers of any race, and to any community among whom they laboured.

The Johannesburg *Star* in the issue from which I cited the above extract waxed jubilant over the fact that there had been an increase in whites to the number of 419 in November over the preceding month. In December, when there was a paltry increase of 79, the same paper was very subdued and silent on the subject.

To a Tynesider whose home is within a mile or two of the Armstrong works, which employs quite as many whites as all the Rand mines put together, and where the numbers fluctuate by many hundreds from time to time, the magnitude of the Johannesburg figures may not carry all the weight that is properly due to them. I have just been reading an able Report of the Public Health Committee of Johannesburg, in which that town is proudly designated "A white man's town, in a white man's country." That the greatest industry of the Transvaal—the greatest of its

kind in the world—out of a total of nearly 120,000 workmen employed on the Rand mines, that it should find employment for some 15,000 white men, and that the white employees should increase, does not, after all, seem so exceedingly marvellous. The smallness of the number of the whites rather than their largeness, and the slowness of their increase, will strike the English reader as the astonishing thing. But I shall proceed to test the value of the figures, as they should be tested, not by an English, but by a Transvaal standard.

Mr. Lyttelton is reported to have placed the increase of whites, since the coming of the Chinese, at 1,700. The increase at the time the right hon. gentleman spoke was actually 1,531, not 1,700. When December is added the total increase reached 1,610. But really whether the increase was 1,500 for five months, or 1,600 for six months, is immaterial. The figures, whatever they may be, are absolutely worthless as a basis for argument or illustration until they are analysed, and until they are taken in relation to the industry as a whole. Nothing is proved by throwing down a mass of crude figures, even when they are printed in the largest capitals at command.

“A judicious man” says Carlyle, “looks at statistics not to get knowledge, but to save himself from having ignorance foisted upon him.” Mr. Carrol Wright—a gentleman who probably has had as much to do with figures, and who knows as well how to use them, as any living man—quoting the saying that “figures do not lie” added—“true, but liars sometimes figure.” I do not suggest, nor do I think, that there has been wilful misrepresentation in the case with which I am dealing. But I do think there has been carelessness and ignorance accompanied by a certain presumption of ignorance and inattention on the part of those before whom the figures are laid.

When such stress is put upon the increase in white labour since the Chinese were imported, those unacquainted with the facts are expected to infer that, never before in the history of the gold mining industry, had the increase of whites been so large, and that the recent increase is due entirely to the introduction of the Chinaman. Both these assumptions are absolutely unwarranted.

Let us look closely at the figures. I have already given them in full, as regards labour, for the past two years, including December, the last month of issue, at the time, I write. The actual increase of whites, since the Chinese came, was then 1,610. The Chinese at the end of 1904 numbered 20,885. During the same period, *i.e.*, from June to December last, there were 9,000 additional Kaffirs employed. How can it be truly said that the increase in whites is nearly wholly due to the advent of the Chinese, when 9,000 additional Kaffirs were employed? Surely the value of these erewhile excellent "muscular machines" should not be so contemptuously ignored!

I turn to the Annual Report of the Government Mining Engineer of the Transvaal for the statistical year ending June, 1903. On page 6 of that Report I find that the increase of whites on the mines for the six months ending June of that year was 1896; while for the preceding six months ending December, 1902, the increase had been no less than 3,710.

What the Johannesburg press said when the increase was so extraordinary I know not, but I imagine they must have been hard pressed to find capitals and notes of admiration big enough and numerous enough to give full expression to their ecstasy! All this was long before the advent of the Chinaman. On the same page of the

Report (p. 6) I observe that the ratio of whites to coloured in 1902 was 22·1 per 100; in the half-year ending June, 1903, the ratio was 19·5; in June, 1904, when the first of the Chinese came, the ratio was 17·73; while in December it had fallen to 14·37 per cent.

From this it is clear that, so far as white workmen are concerned, there was a much greater increase, positive and relative, before the coming of the Chinese than there has ever been since. Manifestly the proportion of white to coloured workers in the mines is steadily and continuously diminishing, whatever may be the fluctuation in the actual numbers employed from month to month.

In December the white workers, as we have seen, increased by 79 only—the smallest increase for many months past. For the same month the coloured workers Kaffirs and Chinese—increased by no fewer than 5,382.

As might be expected, the first to suffer from the importation of the Chinese are the unskilled whites. Beyond doubt their numbers are diminishing. It is said, and I do not doubt truly, that no white workers have been discharged. From the point of view of individual hardship it is certainly less objectionable to diminish numbers by declining to employ new hands rather than by dismissing old ones. But the general result is much the same whether a certain number of workers are discharged, or a similar number, who otherwise would have found work, are left to swell the ranks of the unemployed.



## CHAPTER VIII.

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### A VISIT TO THE RAND MINES.

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#### THE GLEN DEEP AND THE SIMMER AND JACK.

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**W**ISHING to make myself acquainted with the operations and surroundings of the gold mines; to understand, so far as I could, the whole process of extracting the ore, and above all wanting to see for myself the conditions under which the employees, especially the Chinese, live and work, I visited two of the mines—the Glen Deep and the Simmer and Jack—the latter, the largest mine on the Rand. Together, these mines employ 7,820 workmen, of whom 5,126 are Chinamen. Mr. W. T. Anderson, manager of the Glen Deep, and Mr. J. P. Gassan, manager of the Simmer and Jack, afforded me every facility for inspecting whatever I wished to see. At both mines I examined the compounds, kitchens, dining rooms, hospitals, wash houses, and other arrangements.

At the Glen Deep I went underground and saw the Chinese at work, hand-drilling, rock-drilling, tramming and carrying on other mining operations.

To Mr. Anderson, a north-countryman from Darlington way, I feel specially indebted for his great courtesy and kindness. He gave time and labour, without stint, to enable me to understand the whole process of working below ground and above, and he readily supplied me with every information I required, so far as he possessed, or could obtain such information.

All my life having been connected with coal pits, having at one time or another descended and examined mines in many parts of Great Britain, and in the United States of America, I came to the Rand Mines, not altogether as a novice in mining affairs. Though the outward circumstances on the Rand differ in many respects from anything I had seen elsewhere, my previous experience was helpful to me, especially in underground travelling and investigation. In their freedom from smoke and dirt the gold mines above ground have the advantage over any mining district known to me. The great heaps of small coal, with their liability to spontaneous combustion, and with their choking fumes when they do catch fire, which are so often seen around our north-country pit heads, are absent from the Rand. The colliery 'fiery heap', however, has its counter-part in the huge masses of white powdery *debris* piled sometimes mountain high around the mines. Ordinarily these heaps are quite harmless, but when a strong wind sweeps over the high veldt the dust storm which accompanies it becomes a source of annoyance to the locality. Happily these storms seldom come.

When nearing the mines the visitor's attention is arrested by a steady, whirling noise like the distant roar of the sea. This proceeds from the hundreds of 'stamps' which are going incessantly night and day crushing the ore as it is brought out of the mines. At close quarters

the din is deafening, and the unaccustomed human voice, at its loudest cannot make itself heard intelligibly. But a few hundred yards away the sound is not harsh or unpleasant.

All the machinery and appliances at the Glen Deep are thoroughly up-to-date, the very best in quality and workmanship that can be obtained. Some of the engines—those for winding and those for milling—and finer I never saw—were, I noticed, of English and some of American make. The costly machinery, plant, and outfit around the pit; the great depth of the shafts, some of them penetrating two or three thousand feet below the surface; the long galleries underground driven through hard rock sometimes for a few thousand feet before the paying reef is reached—all this shows, even to the untutored eye, that a vast concentration of capital is essential to successful mining on the Rand. In the circumstances mining must be carried on, either by great capitalists, or by numbers of poorer men putting their money together. The issued capital of the Glen Deep, Ltd., is £600,000. Obviously there must always be a large preliminary outlay, amounting in some instances to hundreds of thousands of pounds before an ounce of gold is brought to the surface.

To equip the Glen Deep Mine and to bring it to the producing stage £483,546 was expended. Large as that amount is, it falls short of the average of the Rand Mines (Ltd.), a group of which it is a member. In that group are nine companies, and the average cost of equipping and developing each of them has been £614,377.

This heavy initial cost is one of the adverse conditions with which gold mining on the Rand is confronted. Another is that the average yield per ton of ore worked is exceedingly low compared with many other gold fields of

the world. But on the Rand there are great advantages, one of the chief being that the value of the reef is constant and regular and can be counted upon with almost as much certainty as a coal seam. As a rule, too, there is a good roof in the gold mines, and there is consequently little or nothing to pay for timber, usually a very heavy outlay to the colliery proprietor. I did not see a single prop in the Glen Deep Mine. The gold mine possesses another enormous advantage over the coal mines since the demand for gold always exceeds the supply, and the produce can be sold in any quantity at a fixed price.

After descending the shaft we proceeded along a narrow gallery for several hundred yards until we reached the working place. All this had been cut through the solid unpayable rock—it was what, in north-country pit phraseology, would be called a long “stone drift.” There was here height enough to walk erect, and travelling was comparatively easy. Occasionally we had to step aside that the trammers might pass, or if the space was insufficient, we had to call halt, until we could pass them. The tramming was done by Chinamen, and, as the trucks are heavy in themselves, and more heavy still, of course, when loaded, the work must be hard. But the trammers went along leisurely, at a pace much slower than the “hand-putters” or “hurriers” would do in an English coal pit.

Nearing the working-face, a busy scene presented itself—drillers, fillers, helpers, all at full work. Looking up from the level tramway, we saw scores of dim, flickering lights twinkling in all directions—quite a weird picture. As the reef dips at a considerable angle—the average dip being some 30 degrees—it was no easy task to reach the face of the stope. No longer could we walk erect; we must stoop to conquer. The ascent was not only steep,

but here and there the underlying rock was slippery. Head and feet must be watched at one and the same time—a problem that used to puzzle my good friend Professor Clifton, when, long ago he and I, as fellow Royal Commissioners, were wont to go on a mission of underground inspection.

When the learned Professor was walking circumspectly and paying due heed to his footsteps, his head would go bump against the roof, and when thus unceremoniously warned, he looked to the protection of his head, straightway some unobserved impediment would put itself in the way of his feet. “How do you manage?” he would ask, almost with a touch of envy in his kindly, generous voice. “Instinct, practice! my good friend.” But then, besides the old pitman’s instinct, I had a great pull over Professor Clifton for underground locomotion. In ordinary postures my head and feet were not anything like so far apart as his. When perpendicular, the Professor towered to a height of more than six feet. Under the open sky that was all well enough, but in a yard seam it had great disadvantages!

By dint of vigorous climbing and scrambling I managed to reach the face of the workings. The method of working is similar to the long-wall system in English coal pits, though the face of the reef is much more irregular than I have ever seen the coal face in long-wall working. There were no packs, chocks, or props, such as are necessary in coal mining. Small pillars had been left here and there, as a precaution to support the roof—which in its solidity and natural tenacity apparently needed no artificial support. All around there seemed to be acres of “goaf” from which the precious ore had been extracted. Along the wide expanse of reef, which I have called the working face, scores of busy Chinamen were

vigorously plying hammers and drill—the whirr and din of the rock-drill being almost deafening.

The Chinamen were, as a rule, muscular, well-built men, and they worked with great energy—the perspiration streaming down their faces and bodies. One powerfully built Chinaman gleefully pulled out his drill to let us see the depth to which he had bored. He had drilled more than three feet, truly a good day's work, though but three-quarters of the shift had expired. This feat would have been difficult to surpass by any man, whatever his race or colour. But it was quite exceptional, none of his mates having done near so much. Indeed, according to the evidence in my possession, the average drilling of the Chinaman falls considerably short of the Kaffir standard—the average of which, I understand, exceeds a yard. The ventilation of the Glen Deep, wherever I went, was excellent—the air being clear, cool, and pleasant. There had been no recent blasting. When that takes place on a large scale, the atmosphere will doubtless be very foul until the fumes have cleared away.

I had now seen the Chinamen at work and at play. I had seen them feeding and in their sleeping quarters. Some of them I had seen lame, or ailing, waiting to be examined by the doctors, others sick or injured in the hospital,—always a melancholy picture. The majority of them were of good physique, active and strong. The dining rooms, dormitories, wash-houses, were all on a large scale, clean, orderly, well ventilated, and well arranged. Of wholesome, nutritious food there was ample supply. So far as these and other important points essential to physical health and convenience are concerned there was, so far as I could see, no room for complaint or criticism.

Many of the white miners with whom I talked, some



of them well-known to me—declared that the Chinamen were well treated, much better, they averred, than the Kaffirs. The cost of their food per head is certainly much higher than that of the Kaffirs. Many of the managers contend that the term ‘compound’ conveys a very erroneous impression of the conditions under which the coolies and the Kaffirs live at the mines. It suggests, indeed, closer confinement and narrower limits than the facts warrant. At Kimberley the Kaffirs are practically confined in the compounds; while on the gold mines they may, in their leisure, travel at will over the whole mining premises which, in some instances, extend over several hundred acres.

For the convenience of the employees—especially the whites—some of the arrangements at the Glen Deep were superior to anything I have seen elsewhere. A sort of cabinet—or large locker—is provided, in which the white workman may keep his ordinary clothes while he is engaged at his work underground. Each locker is numbered, and the owner for security has a key. When he returns to the surface he can wash, dress, and go home, while there are hot-air pipes to dry and warm his work clothes that they may be fit for use again when required. This indicates thoughtful considerateness on the part of the management, and, of course, it means considerable outlay.

All that I have said, and more, may be frankly recognised without implying approval either of the methods by which the Chinamen have been brought to the Rand, or of the conditions under which they live and work there. These conditions are in my view entirely inconsistent with the dignity, freedom, and independence of labour as understood by British working men and by the British people.



## CHAPTER IX.

FROM THE CHINAMAN'S  
STAND-POINT.

I HAVE frankly described what I saw at the Glen Deep Mine. That mine I feel perfectly sure is under able, considerate, humane management. But I have reason to think that there is another and a less agreeable side to the picture. Just before I left the Transvaal I received a letter from an acquaintance who is working among Chinamen on a mine near Boksburg. In my correspondent's truthfulness I put implicit confidence. I cull a sentence or two from his letter:—"Some of the Chinamen are very intelligent and soon pick things up; while on the other hand they are very cheeky, and take a lot of keeping in order. They give them the stick here. If you complain about a Chinaman to the Compound Manager, he gets two police boys, one to hold him by the head and another by the legs on the ground, and then the Compound Manager flogs him—a nice way to treat human beings."

I had a glimpse of the situation presented to me from the Chinese standpoint. By the kindness of Mr. T. Raynor, of Johannesburg, I was introduced to Mr. Gim Ah Chun,

who came out to the Transvaal with the earliest Chinese arrivals, and who had been six months in the Comet Mine acting as interpreter. Mr. Chun is a courteous, educated man, who speaks and understands English thoroughly. He was on the point of returning to Penang. I had a long conversation with him, and he was good enough to put in writing some of the grievances of his fellow-countrymen. I shall briefly summarise his statement and leave it to speak for itself.

Mr. Chun roundly asserts that the coolies were brought to the Transvaal under the most cruel false pretences. On two important points they specially complain that they were deceived either by direct misrepresentation, or by the truth having been withheld from them. Scarcely any of them were aware, he says, that they had to work underground, nor had they any conception of the exceedingly small purchasing power of money in the Transvaal. Mr. Chun further stated that he had often "heard the coolies say that if they had known that they were to go underground and do the drilling, &c., they would not have come, even if they had been offered 4/- a day. The average wages paid to these coolies was about 40/- for 30 shifts. After buying milk, sugar, tobacco, and other things which they required there was little or nothing left to send to their families in China." In the Straits Settlements the current wages were 2/- per day, which, when the purchasing power of money is considered, gave a much larger margin than they have on the Rand. "Some coolies who came in October refused to go underground, alleging that they had been promised in Hong Kong that they would be employed as police. They were brought before the Resident Magistrate at Boksburg, and were fined 20/-, or sent to prison for seven days with hard labour."

Mr. Chun supplied me with detailed figures showing convictions, deaths, and those repatriated up to the end of November. There were in all 81 convictions, mostly for desertion, refusing to work, declining to obey orders, and leaving the compound without a permit.

The deaths were 51—36 of them from Beri-Beri.

There had been 185 repatriated because of unfitness for work—178 of them cases of Beri-Beri.

“About 92 coolies every day in hospital out of 1,250 in the compound.

The above is for one compound only, and must be multiplied considerably to get at the exact statistics.”

After I had seen the Chinamen and all the arrangements for their creature comforts which I have described, I was accosted by an enthusiastic pro-Chinese advocate, who, not without a touch of sarcasm in his tone, wished to know what I thought of it all. “That,” pointing to the well-laden tables at which the coolies were feeding with undisguised gusto, “is what many of your countrymen call slavery. What would you call it?” Taken by surprise, I had to confess that my poverty-stricken vocabulary afforded me no English word by which I could fittingly characterise it. “I certainly should not call it freedom I responded. Would you?” My interrogator was silent. I thought at the time, though I did not say, that, in some of its aspects, Chinese labour, and its accompaniments on the Rand, bore a striking resemblance to convict labour as I had seen it at Dartmoor, Chatham, in Columbus, Ohio, and in other penitentiaries in America. There are, of course, many differences; but there are also many points of similarity. The sentinels stationed at every gate-way, the three years’ exile from country, home, wife and family, suggest the penal settlement rather than free life and free labour as we understand them in England.

By the way, it may not be generally known in England that there are many hundreds of coloured convicts employed in the Rand gold mines. When the system began, I have not been able to ascertain, but it seems of recent origin, having, I fancy, been inaugurated under British rule. At the end of 1903 there were 480 convicts employed in the mines, while at the end of 1904 the number had risen to 745; a much larger proportionate increase of coloured convicts than there has been of free whites in the same period.

I have met only one or two men in South Africa who do not seem to think that the essential difference between slavery and freedom lies in material comforts. Is a person well-fed, moderately sheltered, paid something for his labour, unwhipped, or whipped in moderation, has he a few acres of space in which he can roam about when he is not working or sleeping? Then under these conditions, if he is of another race and colour, he cannot reasonably complain, and he is in no proper sense of the word a slave! With those who hold this view, I cannot argue. I must rest content with expressing my own opinion that a person may be sumptuously fed and comfortably housed and yet he may not necessarily be a free man.

It is the vogue now in the Transvaal to pretend that all opposition to the importation of the coolies has subsided. There is indeed no longer any public agitation on the subject. But if any one supposes that opponents are convinced either of the desirability or of the necessity for bringing the Chinamen, he is under a great delusion. I was surprised at the strength and the unanimity of the opposition among the trade unionists and working-men alike at Johannesburg and Pretoria. Of all the miners I conversed with, there was but one who approved of the bringing of the Chinese. I had long conferences with

the Executive Committee of the Rand Miners' Union, and with the leading officials. They were unanimously hostile, and had been so from the first. So far back as October, 1903, they passed resolutions, copies of which I have before me, in which they condemned the proposal and demanded a referendum to ascertain the views of the inhabitants generally before the Labour Ordinance was adopted.

Men who are personally known to me as absolutely trustworthy, told me that the meetings at the mines were convened by the managers or officials, and that the audiences consisted largely of the bosses and staff of the mines. Some of these miners had been offered money, which they could not regard otherwise than as a bribe, to induce them to sign petitions in favour of the Ordinance. On the day when a great meeting was to be held on the Chinese question, the shift bosses at many of the mines went around among the miners announcing a short shift and a free trip to Johannesburg for all who cared to go. Had the miners possessed a strong Union they would have easily defeated these manœuvres, but they were mere scattered units, and they were confronted by the richest, the cleverest, and the most compactly organised body of capitalists in the world.

When the Chinese agitation was at its hottest the Colonial Secretary, and other leading members of the Government declared that they would regard the Transvaal as a self-governing colony, and would be guided by the views of the white people, so far as their views could be ascertained. That was plausible, but it was in substance utterly absurd; it was a sort of sham, make-believe way of shifting responsibility on to other shoulders which could properly belong only to the Government. Without a Parliamentary register, without votes, without

machinery of any kind for testing public opinion how was it possible to ascertain the views of the Transvaal as a whole? A few meetings held at the mines, petitions got up in the way I have described, were absolutely worthless as an index of opinion throughout the country.

In some countries the press, where it is anything like unanimous, may be taken to afford some fair indication of public opinion; but no one affects to believe that the Johannesburg daily papers reflect the general opinion of the Transvaal—except on such few points as the Chamber of Mines may happen to be in agreement with the people. My own belief is that, under no decent system of representative Government, would it have been possible to carry a measure like “The Labour Importation Ordinance.” Among working men of all trades I found general, unabated hostility; even some directors of mining companies whom I met in Johannesburg—themselves strongly favourable to the Ordinance—frankly admitted that it never could have been passed in any freely elected Parliament.

Be that as it may, on one point I am clear; the Imperial Government should have stoutly and resolutely declined to sanction the Ordinance until responsible Government is firmly established in the Transvaal. If, after being fully equipped with self-government such a measure were passed, lovers of liberty might grieve that some of our noblest traditions had been abandoned, or besmirched, but then the stigma of active participation in the disgrace would not have attached to us.



## CHAPTER X.

## CHINESE AND KAFFIRS.

I REFERRED to the excellent physique of many of the Chinamen. Those I saw were natives of Northern China; the first batch from the South, I am told, were greatly inferior. Several of those at the Deep Glen Mine were really bright looking men, intellect and feeling peering through their round, little eyes, and lighting up their not unpleasant features. I am perhaps as free from racial prejudice as any man, and strongly as I object to the bringing of the Chinamen in the way they have been brought, pride of race has nothing to do with my objections. But this mental alertness of the Chinaman; his readiness to learn new things and to adapt himself to altered conditions will make him, directly and indirectly, a formidable competitor to the white man. Already the coolie is superseding the white unskilled worker, and long before he has been his three years in the mines, he will require little or no training or supervision, and the wages of white men will ultimately suffer.

Cheaper labour all around is the goal at which the mining authorities are aiming. Otherwise I cannot understand the enormous cost which they have incurred, and are incurring in the importation of the Chinese. What has been the total outlay? It is difficult to obtain full information; some of the essential facts are not indeed yet obtainable. Not, let me frankly say, because of the reticence of the Chamber of Mines. Never anywhere have I found less secrecy and disguise; never



more readiness to afford every possible information. I do not believe that any organised body of capitalists elsewhere—certainly not in my own country—would have given to a stranger (especially to one whom they knew to be strongly opposed to their policy on a matter of fundamental importance) similar information to that which was so freely supplied to me.

So far as they go the following facts may be accepted as trustworthy, and they will give some notion of the initial costs of bringing the Chinamen :—Mr. Schumacher at the Annual General Meeting of the Glen Deep Mine held in Johannesburg on October 19th last, stated that the Company would have been able to pay a dividend for the half-year, but for the decision to import Chinese labour. This had necessitated “expenditure for additions to compounds, costs of importation, &c., amounting to the very large sum of £47,000, of which £12,000 advanced for wages, &c., will be recoverable after a period of time.” This, for one mining company only, and not one of the largest, is certainly a huge sum.

The following facts and figures were given to me on the highest authority, in answer to questions which I had put :—“It is impossible to state definitely the relative cost of Chinaman and Kaffir, efficiency being considered, as the value of the Chinaman as a working asset cannot be ascertained until after, at least, another six month’s trial.”

The approximate cost of importation of a Chinaman is £17, including cost of repatriation, all of which is irrecoverable ; and the cost per head for construction of compounds is about £7 10/-, also irrecoverable—total £24 10/-.

The average cost of recruitment of the individual Kaffir during the past year was about £3. The Chamber of Mines estimate that the average monthly cost of feeding a Kaffir is about 20/-, whereas the Chinaman costs about 25/-.

My question as to the relative cost of Chinese as compared with Kaffir labour, it will be observed, is left unanswered. The inference, I think, will be a safe one that up to the present time, the comparison is not favourable to the Chinaman. The £3 per head for recruiting the Kaffir compared with the £24 10/- for the Chinaman, and the 5/- per month extra for feeding the Chinaman, will require the latter to be a much superior "muscular machine" to make him economically equal to the Kaffir. There is, of course, the three years engagement of the Chinaman, as compared with the six months or yearly term of the Kaffir, which is an important set-off on the other side. But I will not dwell further on the economic aspect—though I fully recognise its importance.

When I am asked, as I have often been asked, whether I saw anything on the Rand Mines to modify or remove my objections to the Chinese, my answer has always been an emphatic negative. "We must have a hindmost thought, and judge all things by it," says Pascal. My hindmost, my innermost, thought on this question has little or nothing to do with economics, has absolutely nothing to do with race, colour, or even with ample feeding or generally humane treatment. I have a profound, an ineradicable objection to the importation and deportation of human beings in droves, and of shackling them by all sorts of galling restrictions and disabilities.

That the advent of the Chinamen will quicken the development of the mines, that it will give speedier and larger dividends to hungry shareholders, that it will make a few additional millionaires, and that it will benefit many poorer and most estimable people, does not at all reconcile me to the methods by which this has been accomplished. Whether the gold fields of the Transvaal shall be exhausted in fifty or in twice fifty years is not of vital moment to

England, or to the British Empire. But it is of vital and enduring consequence that our best traditions should be handed forward to future generations untarnished; that we should continue to be a free country in which the worth and dignity of honest labour shall always be recognised and maintained.

It is the fashion just now to hold up the Chinaman as a paragon of all the virtues, and praise of him is usually balanced by a corresponding disparagement of the Kaffir. But the strongest pro-Chinese advocates, when they have come in close touch with their proteges have to admit that the Chinaman is not wholly exempt from common human frailties. Many of the coolies are great gamblers, opium smokers, and are addicted to thievery, petty and other. But, regarded as a wealth producing machine, it is hoped and believed by the capitalists that the Chinaman will prove highly effective, and, should that hope be realised, his morals will not be too closely scrutinised or too censoriously judged.

As to the Kaffir, I have seldom heard him spoken of with kindness, sympathy, or, as I think, with justice, by the white man. Often have I heard him stigmatised as stupid and lazy. A New Zealander whom I met was loud in his denunciation of the Kaffir's stupidity. "In what way does he show his stupidity?" "Oh, in every way," was the reply. "I can never get my 'boys' to understand what I say to them." When I asked if he addressed them in their own tongue, he seemed startled at the unreasonableness of my question. "Certainly not," he answered, "I expect the Kaffir to learn my language, I do not think it is my business to learn his!" This man had been in the Kaffir's country two or three years and hardly knew a word of the language of the natives.

The charge of stupidity is, I dare say, in some cases

well-founded, but, speaking generally, there is no justification whatever for saying that the Kaffir is lazy. In the short conversation I had with Lord Milner, he rebutted this criticism with a warmth which I thought did him great credit. "When I am told," said his lordship, "that the Kaffir is lazy, I ask who is doing nearly all the hard, rough work of this country? The Kaffirs are the most industrious section of our population."

When laziness is attributed to the Kaffir it simply means, on analysis, that he is disinclined to work underground.

The word Kaffir, it is well to remember, is a generic term which is applied to tribes which are very dissimilar and are often very hostile to each other. These tribes differ quite as much as do the various nations of Europe, one Kaffir being as unlike another as the Englishman is unlike the Italian. Some of the best tribes, such as the Zulus and the Swazis have a strong antipathy to underground labour, although they are, as a rule, first-class workers on the surface.

Then it should not be forgotten that the mortality in the Rand Mines, though happily diminishing, is still appallingly high. Miners' phthisis cuts off great numbers of men in the prime of life, white and coloured. The Government and the mining authorities are fully alive to the gravity of the evil, and are taking steps to deal with it as effectively as possible.

To the natives mining on the Rand is frightfully fatal—disease and accident slaying them in vast numbers. Here are a few figures from a speech delivered by the President of the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg on January 19th of this year. In 10 months of 1902 the death rate of natives was 51·25 per 1,000. For the year 1903 it was 80·92 per 1,000. In 1904, from accident and disease, the death rate was 48·2 per 1,000; and from

disease alone 43·97 per 1,000. Small wonder that, with such a death rate, and with reduced wages after the war, the natives did not rush to the gold mines !

The gold and the diamond mines so completely absorb public attention that the other industries of the Transvaal are apt to be ignored. In the diamond mines there were employed at the end of December 3,981 persons, 406 of whom were whites. In the coal mines the total numbers employed were 9,869, of whom 459 were whites. It is worthy of note that during the year the white workers in the coal mines had slightly diminished in numbers, while the coloured had increased by 792.

“And yet people gas on about this being a white man’s country !” The speaker was the manager of a gold mine employing something over two hundred Kaffirs. I had inquired how many white workers he employed, and he answered “fourteen, including myself.” Then he explained that to employ white men only, or white men in any considerable numbers, would soon shut up the mine altogether. All this I fully recognised. I have never myself been under the delusion that the Transvaal is a white man’s country in the sense that it will ever give employment to white workmen in any considerable numbers. In fact I do not think it is either practicable or desirable that the gold mines, or any other industry, should be worked exclusively by white men, in a country where the whites are so vastly outnumbered by the coloured population. Nobody, so far as I know, has ever suggested anything so absurd—though, for controversial reasons, it is sometimes convenient to assume that this view is held by those who oppose the importation of the coolies. The jingoes and wilder imperialists are the only persons who “gas on” about the Transvaal having a great future before it as a white man’s country.

## CHAPTER XI.

## PRETORIA :

## MR. KRUGER'S FUNERAL.

WE visited Pretoria, and there I had further excellent opportunities of gaining additional information on two points of importance, viz., the organised labour movement, and the state of feeling between British and Dutch.

While in Pretoria we were the guests of an ardent trade-unionist—a shrewd, intelligent Cumberland man connected with some branch of engineering. My associates there were mostly working men—engineers, joiners, and other employees on the railways or in the railway workshops. There are some 2,000 trade unionists in Pretoria, many of them members of the Society of Amalgamated Engineers. The working community there is more settled than on the Rand—the proportion of married men living with their families being considerable. There is the utmost freedom of meeting and of combination in Pretoria and throughout the Transvaal, and, whatever may be the difficulties of forming and conducting effective trade



unions, no legal or administrative restrictions are imposed by the Government. In short, personal liberty and freedom of speech, for the white man, are, so far as I could judge, as complete in the Transvaal as in England.

I was in Pretoria on the day of Mr. Kruger's funeral—an event of melancholy and memorable interest. Other great ceremonies of the kind which I had witnessed came to my mind—the obsequies of a distinguished English statesman in Westminster Abbey, and a military funeral, that of a French general, which I witnessed in Paris many years ago. In outward form, in ritual, in “the trappings and the suits of woe,” in the orderly marshalling of masses of men, they were very dissimilar. All were impressive, and all gave expression in varying degrees to the emotions of vast and diverse crowds of men.

Nothing could have been simpler than the burial of Kruger. Pretoria was crowded as it had probably never been before. From every part of South Africa the Boers came in thousands, strong, stalwart, well-developed, grave, religious men; and the British were present almost in equal numbers—all respectfully and sympathetically joining in the ceremony. The church in which the body lay prior to the interment was lined from end to end and from side to side with beautiful, costly wreaths, brought or sent, many of them, from distant parts of the world. Some of the finest of these floral and artistic tributes were brought by the trade unionists and working men's societies of Johannesburg, of Pretoria, and many other towns of all the South African Colonies. Deputations of working men in great numbers joined in the funeral procession, many of them having travelled scores and hundreds of miles, at no inconsiderable expenditure of time and money, to show their respect for the memory of the dead



President. One wreath from the workmen bore the brief, significant motto:—"We miss you!" The depth, genuineness, and universality of the working men's sorrow and respect could not be doubted.

Said a leading trade-unionist to me, "Oom Paul was the most accessible of men; he was always ready to listen to our grievances. There," pointing to the verandah of his homely, unpretentious house, "we could see him whenever we cared to go. Over a cup of coffee and a friendly pipe, he would listen, talk, and argue with us. If we made good our complaint, he quickly removed it; if we failed to convince him, he frankly told us that he could do nothing. Whether we got what we asked for or not, we always came away satisfied that we had been fully heard, and that we had been treated fairly and considerately." For the English workman to thoroughly understand the importance of this, it is necessary to remember that, in the Transvaal, the State was and is a large employer, controlling the railways and some other great undertakings, which, with us, are conducted by private enterprise.

I have reason to know that the Boers were deeply touched by the respectful manifestations of British sympathy on the occasion of the funeral. The timely, tactful message of the king greatly contributed to the satisfactory result. General Louis Botha told me that he and his fellow-countrymen were specially gratified by the attitude of the workmen. Between the workmen and the Boers there is, indeed, fundamentally much political agreement. On the controversy now being waged between the advocates respectively of representative and of responsible government, working men and Boers are, in the main, on the same side, both being in favour of immediate responsible government.

The personal popularity of General Botha, General Delarey and other prominent Boer leaders is very pronounced among the workmen of the Transvaal. Over and over again I was told, not by workmen only, but by representative men of other classes as well, that if Generals Botha and Delarey came forward as candidates for the Legislative Assembly, or for other positions of trust, they would be elected even by British votes.

Happily, I saw or heard nothing to show that the war had left any legacy of bitterness between British and Boer. Much, indeed, I observed to the contrary. Among the actual fighters no deep-rooted antipathies are felt; where these exist at all they are found among the 'sitters on the fence', among the prompters and promoters of the war, who usually kept well out of the fray themselves.

It is interesting to note that I was introduced to General Botha by a British officer, Col. Buist, whom I met in Pretoria. Not, indeed, that a sponsor was required, for I had met the General in London, and I had received a cordial letter from him inviting me to call at his home. But, knowing that he must be absorbed in the arrangements for the funeral, I hesitated to avail myself of the invitation. "Oh, come along", said Col. Buist, "I go to the house often. I'll see Mrs. Botha, and if the General is too busy to receive you, she will say so. But I know it will be all right." The interview, though I purposely made it short, was most agreeable. I was told by Col. Buist and others that as soon as the war was over, General and Mrs. Botha did all they could to bring about cordial relations between Boers and British, and that military and civilian Englishmen were often their guests. But though there is no bitterness, there is undoubtedly among sections of the British some uncertainty, bordering one might say on distrust, and

suspicion of the Boers. The extraordinary reserve and reticence, the marvellous power of silence of the Dutch character, lends encouragement to this doubt and uncertainty.

The numerical strength of the Boers in the Transvaal is not, I believe, known with accuracy. But there can be little doubt that they are increasing much more rapidly than the British. Shrewd observers must see, therefore, that if the Boers play their cards skilfully they will ultimately, and ere long, command the majority of votes and become practically the governing race in the Transvaal. The Boers, too, are united, the British are divided; the Boers are mostly on the land, they marry and rear large families, while the majority of the British are single men, and of the married, a considerable proportion have their wives and families in England.

Facts like these suggest doubts as to whether South Africa has a future for the British race. "In 20 years," said a stalwart Colonial to me "the British will lose this country." This bold prophet of evil had been introduced to me by a gentleman in the Transvaal Civil Service—himself a keen, well-informed politician of distinctly Tory proclivities. The person introduced was described as "a rough diamond," truthful and straight, though of somewhat extreme and erratic views from the orthodox Tory standpoint. "I am colonial born," he proudly confided to me. "My parents were English; I was brought up a Conservative, now I am a Radical, travelling fast towards Republicanism. I was in the war all the time, nearly three years, fighting on the wrong side. "You English," he continued, with superb scorn, "are of no use on the land here, you are too impatient, too lazy, too aristocratic. I give you 20 years; in that time, or less, you will lose South Africa." I did not attempt to

argue with my "rough diamond" friend—he was six feet high and muscular. I gently asked for a little elucidation. "What did he mean by our losing the country in 20 years? Were we to have another war? Would there be a Boer rebellion, and would the Transvaal cease to be part of the British Empire?" "Oh no! Certainly not. The Boers are loyal now and henceforth they will always be loyal British subjects. They won't revolt; they would be great fools if they did, when, without firing a shot, they can and will become the real rulers of the country. Look at the situation. The Boers hold the land; wherever a farm is vacant it is almost sure to go into their hands; they marry and bring up big families, while the English stick to 'Jewsbury,' to bachelorhood, and they swarm the country with yellow men. How, in these circumstances, can the British permanently retain and rule the country?"

Had I spoken thus I should have been dubbed "a little Englishman." This man had not been soured by adversity; he made no complaint of personal ill treatment; he was a "prospector" under one of the great land and mining syndicates, and had received some 70 pounds for his last month's work. To speak of our "losing the country" as a result of the Boers becoming a majority of the white population is, to my thinking, extravagant and absurd, though the outlook is certainly of bad omen for those who expect the Transvaal to become a great white man's country, peopled largely by men of the British race.

As to the agricultural possibilities of the Transvaal, it is difficult to obtain accurate information. Looking as I did at the land with an untrained eye, so far as I could see from the railway over the three or four hundred miles that I travelled, the soil seemed rough and exceedingly poor. Only a few scattered patches were cultivated, and

I observed no sheep and few cattle or live stock of any kind. Here and there cottage gardens looked well, growing gorgeous flowers and kitchen vegetables plentifully. Opinions as to the productiveness of the soil are startlingly diverse. Almost daily I conversed with men who seemed equally experienced, equally competent to judge, and yet their verdicts were opposite as the poles asunder. One would say: "Everything depends upon the gold mines; so long as they hold out, the country will flourish; when they are exhausted the country is done." The next man you meet would tell you with equal dogmatism that, "Altogether apart from the gold mines, there is a great future for South Africa. Besides gold, there are other minerals, silver, tin, coal; and much of the land is fruitful if properly handled." Many Colonial farmers with whom I talked took this more hopeful view. Lack of water is the great drawback; but it is said that the rainfall is ample, and that where the water is conserved all is well. The Transvaal is, I am told by competent authorities, a stock-raising rather than a wheat-growing or an arable country. Capital, energy, enterprise applied to the land, are wanted. Under the most favourable conditions, however, it will be long before the country can feed its own population, and exportation to any considerable extent is not to be looked for.

No question is more frequently discussed than that of the future of South Africa as a white man's country. Opinions, as we have seen, are not only divergent, but contradictory. The ultimate answer must depend largely on the producing capacity of the land. That white men can live healthily and well there, so far as the climate is concerned, and can attain a ripe old age is certain. But can they, in any considerable numbers, obtain the

means of living? Can comparatively poor white men marry and bring up families? Unless that can be done, the country can never be in any proper sense a white man's country. History, experience, statistics, have not as yet said clearly that South Africa in general, and the Transvaal in particular, are to be the homes of multitudes of white men.

The total population of British South Africa, according to the latest census returns, is 5,198,175, of whom only 1,135,016 are Europeans. The total white population of the Transvaal, with an area twice the size of England and Wales, is 300,000. While the coloured population is steadily increasing, the Europeans are practically stationary. In the last five years, the whites in the Transvaal have increased only by 10,000, and they are but 22·17 per cent., while the coloured are 77·83 per cent. of the population. If, with the gold mines in full swing, the white population of the Transvaal is practically at a stand-still, is it likely to increase faster when the mines are exhausted?

It may be said that the country is comparatively new to the white man. That is true of the Transvaal, but the greater part of British South Africa has been known to Europe, and has been inhabited by Europeans for hundreds of years, for as long, in fact, as North America.



## CHAPTER XII.

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### SUMMARY: CONCLUSION.

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**A**MONG the subjects which I desired to investigate while in the Transvaal were the following:—  
The natural resources of the country, land, minerals; the supply of labour, skilled and unskilled; the condition of the workers, especially as regards wages, health and safety; the general state of trade; the relationship between the two chief white races, British and Boers; government, its machinery and administration, general and local; personal liberty, including freedom of speech, right of public meeting and right of combination.

These are some of the root questions, which in all countries and under every form of government, lie at the foundation of the prosperity and well-being of a people. Nearly all these topics have been touched upon in what I have already written, but, as I do not wield the pen of a ready writer, they have been handled less systematically, less concisely, and less trenchantly than I could have wished.

On the government of the Transvaal I have said little, nor can I with advantage add much to the little I have said. After the wreckage of the war a whole system of



administration had to be set up afresh. Much has been done in the way of re-construction. In two departments of great importance good work has been accomplished—many free schools have been opened, and courts of justice have been established in which the law is strictly enforced. As to the schools, I heard complaints only on one point. The teachers appointed, it is admitted, are well trained men, but scarcely any of them know the Dutch language. This criticism came not from the Boers, but from Englishmen who thought it was a mistake in tactics not to conciliate the Boers, especially as good teachers, expert in both languages, could have been brought from Cape Colony. This, I believe, is now being done to some extent.

Practically the government of the Transvaal is at present an autocracy—or, perhaps more strictly, an oligarchy. “The Chamber of Mines is our Cabinet;” said a gentleman to me shortly after I arrived in the country—“it formulates the policy, Lord Milner carries out that policy, and the Johannesburg press invariably supports the Chamber of Mines and Lord Milner. That, too, is just as it should be, since everything depends upon the gold mines, without which we can do nothing.”

I was surprised at the criticisms which I heard, almost everywhere, of Lord Milner’s administration. Of Lord Milner personally, of his high character, his great ability, his industry, his devotion to public duty as he sees it, I heard the warmest admiration expressed—almost, but not quite, universally. But the condemnation of his policy and administration was equally general. I was told that this adverse feeling was of comparatively recent growth—that, a few months ago it was scarcely possible, without reproof, for any one to speak of Lord Milner, or his government save eulogistically. Whether the change is in his lordship or in other people’s opinions of him I

cannot say. The complaints, so far as I heard them definitely formulated, were two; Lord Milner, it was alleged, too slavishly followed the lead of the mining magnates and the financiers; and he had appointed to responsible, well-paid posts in the civil service large numbers of young, inexperienced men. These men were admittedly highly educated in the technical sense, but they were unfitted by previous training and experience for the great positions they hold.

Whether well or ill founded these criticisms were to be heard among all classes. Speaking to a gentleman, himself a member of the stock exchange in Johannesburg, also a director of a gold mining company and interested in other commercial undertakings, he said "you are surprised to hear this criticism of Lord Milner's government. I may tell you it is wide-spread. The only people who do not complain are the financiers, and the reason they are satisfied is because Lord Milner has bowed his knee to them and has always done their bidding."

In thus reporting what I heard I must not be understood to be expressing opinions of my own. Though I observed defects here and there in the local government of the country districts, some of which I have already mentioned, defects such as might be expected under a new system in a country so large, so sparsely peopled as the Transvaal, and so recently devastated by war, yet I saw no evidence of anything that could properly be called mal-administration. I ought to say further that the members of the civil service whom I met impressed me most favourably. At one time or another, at one place or another I saw and conversed with many of them, some occupying high, and some more moderate positions. Among these were inspectors and sub-inspectors of mines and others. Those I met were, without exception, bright, capable, well educated men in the

prime of life, and so far as I could judge, they were in every way worthy representatives of the British Civil Service; which, in my estimation is, taking it all in all, the best service of the kind in the world.

Another surprise to me was the large proportion of men who, having been through the war, now entertain grave doubts as to the justice of our quarrel. My tall Colonial friend, "the rough diamond," who told me that he had fought three years "on the wrong side"—said "wrong side" being ours—was not I found at all singular or exceptional. A strong well developed artizan in the prime of life said to me: "Yes, I went through the war I am sorry to say. I have been doing penance ever since. If I have twenty or thirty years more of life given to me I shall do penance all the time, and I hope Heaven will forgive me." Similar stories I heard from many others, all volunteered, for I never myself introduced the war as a subject of conversation. If I may judge by what I heard in the Transvaal, I should say that fully nine-tenths of those who fought in the ranks feel now that the war has brought no benefits at all commensurate with its heavy cost in blood and treasure.

Certainly material prosperity has not come with British rule. Save among the rich and well-to-do class, everybody I met declared that the whites generally, especially the workers, are much worse off now than before the war. "I should be delighted to have things as they were, grievances and all," said a workman to me in Pretoria, and the sentiment received the warm approval of his comrades who stood around.

I may here say that the black clouds of trade depression which hung over the sea-board towns on our outward voyage had not lifted when we returned three months

later. Complaints of business stagnation were now as rife in Natal as in Cape Colony. In Durban the improvement of which I have spoken had not been maintained; unhappily it had been a false start, a mere spurt, and the reports of short work and slack trade were as doleful as ever.

Another circumstance of bad omen I ought to mention. I should say fully twice as many third class passengers came home in the Durham Castle as we had on the outward voyage. With few exceptions they were strong, active men in the prime of life, many of them married and accompanied by their wives and families. From conversation I found that they were mostly engineers, joiners, or workers in some branch of the building trades. Some few of them had been working on the Rand gold mines, but the greater number were from Cape Town or other parts of Cape Colony. None of those with whom I talked had been out for more than three or four years, and they were now returning for want of employment, many of them very hard up. They gave sad accounts of destitution and of lack of employment, declaring that workmen in the old country should be warned against going to South Africa unless they have definite work awaiting them. Otherwise they were entering a trap from which escape would be difficult, if not impossible.

For its miscellaneous assortment of human beings the Transvaal is, I should think, unrivalled. There you may see men of many colours and of nearly every race and nationality. In Kaapsche Hoop I met in the space of a few days a Greek, an Armenian, a Russian, a Norwegian, besides natives of India, of Canada, New Zealand, Queensland, and other parts of our widely scattered, diversified Empire. Many of them, though comparatively young in years, had travelled in many lands, had

seen much of life, breasting its difficulties with courage and resource. For the most part they are very well-informed, having had their wits sharpened by intercourse with men, and owing little to what schools and colleges can teach. Fond of conversation, and not averse from controversy, they are remarkably frank and outspoken in their expression of opinion of men and things. Their opinions, too, are almost as diversified as their nationalities. This applies generally to many of those whom I met in other parts of South Africa. Taken altogether, they are a brave, generous, hospitable folk, very cosmopolitan, strongly democratic withal, having a healthy contempt for red tape and conventionality. But their democracy has distinct limitations; it embraces white men only, even at its widest, while at its narrowest it does not go beyond people of the British race.

Colour prejudice is, indeed, almost everywhere exceedingly strong. Curiously enough, too, it is often most contemptuously expressed by persons who bear no outward semblance that they are lineal, unmixed descendants of "Cedric the Saxon!" I noticed that, as a rule, those who spoke most disparagingly of the Indian and the Kaffir because of the colour of their skins would hardly be likely to take rank amongst the "upper ten" in any aristocracy based too rigidly on the tint of the complexion.

All this might be laughed at by the cynically inclined, were it not fraught with possibilities of the most serious consequence. This colour hostility takes practical form in unexpected ways and in unexpected quarters. A Wesleyan minister told me that his having started a school for Kaffirs had made him exceedingly unpopular with the members of his own church. A lady informed my wife how terribly shocked she had been to see coloured

persons in a chapel she attended, though "of course," she added, "they sit in the back seats." Just before I left the Transvaal there was great excitement in one of the Rand towns, because a site for a church had been granted to a coloured congregation. Indignation meetings were being held to denounce the government. Most of these critics and denouncers are no doubt professed followers of Jesus Christ. When these fastidious Christians reach the heaven to which they aspire, they must feel exceedingly discomforted, unless in their "Fathers house of many mansions," they find that the best apartments have been reserved for the exclusive use of whites!

Since black and white are fated to live together in South Africa, and since the black can do without the white much better than the white can do without the black, it is most important that the relations between them should be as peaceful and friendly as possible. In practice they do, as a rule, I believe, work together fairly well. Though I heard much in denunciation of the coloured man, though I was told again and again that the only way to govern him is to use the sjambok freely, I was on the other hand informed by friends of long experience and by large employers of Kaffirs, that they had no difficulty whatever in managing their 'boys' without harshness or punishment of any kind.

Some of the most difficult questions that confront South Africa have their roots in these racial differences and antagonisms. How can these miscellaneous races and tribes be welded into a cohesive, homogeneous nation? The solution of this vital problem will require all the white man's best moral qualities. So far as I can judge the masses of our people at home are not likely to derive any great material benefits from our possession of the Transvaal. Can we then have the satisfaction of believing



that we are advancing humanity as a whole? Pascal's saying, which the late Bishop Westcott loved to quote, that the nation is an organism with a real life,—that "humanity is a man who lives and grows for ever," is perhaps too lofty and too abstract an ideal to be generally and speedily operative even among the best of men. But if we have to vindicate our right to empire in the Transvaal before the world, we shall have to do something more than make a few millionaires; we shall have to recognise that it is some part of our mission to improve and civilize the aboriginal natives and not merely to use them as "excellent muscular machines" for the advancement of the white man's interests.



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